



Chaos predicted despite official advice not to panic over thrombosis warning

Pill alert for a million women

JOHN VON RADOWITZ

The Government yesterday warned more than a million women of danger from a widely used contraceptive pill which was previously thought to be the safest on the market.

The combined oral contraceptive has been recommended by doctors and family planning clinics since it was introduced to Britain in the last decade.

While the Government's Committee on Safety of Medicines was accused of acting too

Inside

Seven brands that could be dangerous page 2

A sufferer's story A controversial contraceptive page 3

Polly Toynbee page 21

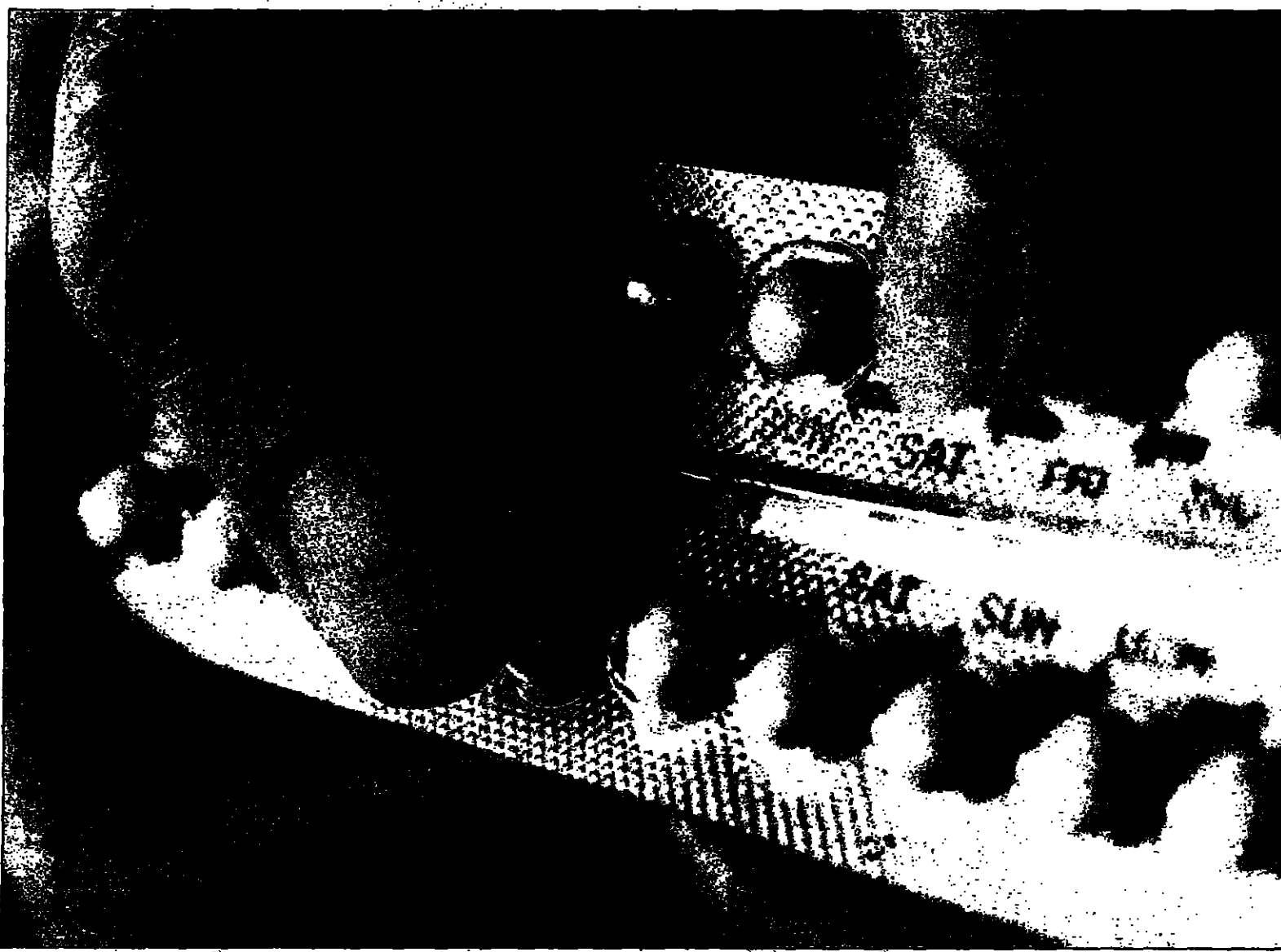
Leading article page 20

hastily in releasing such a far-reaching alert, GPs and pharmacists were told how new studies had apparently showed that the contraceptive was twice as likely as other types of pill to cause deep vein blood clots.

The pills are sold under the brand names Femodene, Femodene ED, Minulet, Triadene, Tri-Minulet, Marvelon and Mercilon. Doctors have been advised not to prescribe them to women who are overweight, or have varicose veins or a history of thrombosis.

Women were urged not to panic and suddenly stop taking the pills, thereby risking unwanted pregnancy, but one senior doctor at a leading family planning clinic predicted "chaos" with women coming off the pill "in droves" as a result of the warning.

The Royal College of Nursing said thousands of family planning and practice nurses



A bitter pill: The new brands of combined oral contraceptive were thought to be the safest ever, but now experts are raising doubts about them

were expecting a deluge of calls.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation was said to be furious that data was taken from an unpublished study it had carried out.

The pills all contain one of two particular types of the hormone progesterone, combined with oestrogen, and are taken by about 50 per cent of

British women who use oral contraceptives.

When the pills were introduced in Britain they were hailed as an important advance and were said to protect against ovarian and womb cancer, as well as pelvic infections that can cause infertility. The new formula was also thought to cut the risk of arterial, as opposed to venous, thrombosis. Arterial

blood clots can lead to strokes and heart attacks.

New research now appears to indicate the risk of deep vein thrombosis with the combined pill is six times the normal average and double that faced by women who use other types of contraceptive pill. However, experts were keen to stress that even this level of risk represents a ratio of only

three in every 10,000 for healthy young women - half the natural risk of thrombosis during pregnancy.

Professor Michael Rawlins, chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, told a news conference at the Department of Health that he had written to all doctors and pharmacists about the findings. "For women who are on

these pills we would advise them, firstly, not to panic, and secondly to continue their cycle of pills and to go and discuss with their doctors the advisability of continuing," he said.

"The chance of a woman on the pill experiencing a thrombosis is small. There is no need for anyone to suddenly stop taking the pill. Whatever pill is being taken, the current

cycle should be finished. Women who are taking any other brand can be reassured about the safety of their pill and that there is no need to change. For the vast majority of women, the pill is a safe and highly effective form of contraception."

First indications of a problem with the pills emerged in July from the World Health Organisation study. At that stage the findings were incomplete and inconsistent, but Government health officials were sufficiently alarmed to urge a speeding-up of another study on the same subject under way in Europe. Its results were obtained this month.

Final confirmation that action had to be taken came after the Committee on Safety of Medicines conducted a rapid study of its own using information from a GP database.

The question of whether to withdraw the pills was discussed with family planning experts but was rejected partly because there are women who cannot tolerate any other types of contraceptive pill.

Government scientists cannot explain why the combinations pills are less safe but are examining the theory that the risk is linked to a reaction between the two hormones.

However, Dr Anne Szarewski, senior clinical medical officer at the Margaret Pyke Centre, in London, a leading family planning clinic, last night described the Government's reaction as irresponsible and premature.

"We don't even know what numbers were involved in these studies, and small-scale studies are subject to a fair amount of bias," she said.

West Sussex-based Schering Health Care, which manufactures Femodene, Triadene and Tri-Minulet, said: "The company is deeply concerned about actions which could result in undue concern and anxiety in users, which may arise from the controversy," it added.

Health Information Service freephone 0800 665544.

British blood sold to Turkey for profit

EXCLUSIVE

LOUISE JURY and HUGH POPE

British-made blood products are on sale abroad at four times the UK price, despite promises to donors that there is no commercial exploitation.

Repeated reassurances from the National Blood Authority, designed to allay donors' fears over what happens to their blood, were undermined yesterday by the first details of the overseas mark-ups.

A Turkish price list seen by the *Independent* shows Factor VIII, a blood by-product used to treat haemophiliacs, on sale for four times the price paid by some British hospitals.

Mr Osman Karsameroglu, of Sodhan Medical Instruments Manufacturing and Trading Company, the licensed distributor for the British products in Turkey, said it was the common practice for his government to multiply the price of imported medicine by two or three times.

Although details of the pricing of the British products is unknown, Kadir Sonmez, a Turkish ministry of health spokesman, confirmed: "The original company sends an invoice. Then we apply an exchange rate and legal profits."

A spokeswoman for the National Blood Authority (NBA), whose commercial arm is the Bio Products Laboratory (BPL), said while it could not control overseas practices, it made no money out of the trade and only sold surpluses.

"We have a choice. We either burn the surpluses or we can offer them for sale and the money we get from these sales goes back into the service," she said.

But the revelations incensed some doctors and donors, many of whom have never been told where their blood goes.

Secret trade, page 10

PM condemns West book deal

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Reporter

The Prime Minister, John Major, told the House of Commons he felt "extreme distaste" for the controversial sale of Fred West's biography brokered by the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris.

The deal agreed a fortnight ago between Mr Harris, the biographer Geoffrey Wansell and the publishers Hodder Headline, was revealed by the *Independent* yesterday. Mr Harris made the deal as trustee for the West estate after the Gloucester builder who was charged with 12 counts of murder hanged himself.

It includes the hugely valuable assets of 132 police tapes of interviews with West, their transcripts, and West's 100-page autobiography *I Was Loved By An Angel*, written in Winslow Green Prison, Birmingham.

Douglas French, the MP for Gloucester, asked Mr Major: "Do you not find such a deal ex-

tremely distasteful?" Mr Major replied: "Personally, I share your feelings." He was speaking as it emerged that Rose West, who is being tried for the murders of 10 women and young girls, will get a half-share in the proceeds of the book and any other profits from the estate.

Leo Gostley, her solicitor, said yesterday that she had not renounced a share in the profits, although she had signed an affidavit saying that she would not keep any of the profits, but give them to her children. The solicitor added that about £60,000 had already been used in legal fees for the Official Solicitor and Taylor Joynton Garrett, the top City firm which he has hired to advise on copyright.

Mr Gostley said that Mrs West was entitled to keep the 132 tapes of police interviews. These could be extremely valuable - and even auctioned to the highest bidder.

Jury at Crown Court, page 5

Howard safe as Labour fails to draw blood

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, last night survived a Commons onslaught against his sacking of Derek Lewis, Director General of the Prison Service, with a skilful counter-attack on Tony Blair for allowing himself to be used as the "vehicle for the spleen of a bitter man."

After one of the rowdiest and most bitter Commons debates since the Westland helicopter row in 1986, Mr Howard not only predictably secured the backing of the Commons in last night's 280-221 vote but also delighted Tory backbenchers with a robust Parliamentary performance which helped to secure his tenure at the Home Office.

The Home Secretary's victory was secured at the price of publishing the official minute of a meeting on January 10 which

establishes that Labour was correct to argue that the Home Secretary raised the issue of suspending the Governor of Parkhurst, John Marriott, rather than transferring him.

The minute, which Labour's Home Affairs spokesman, Jack Straw, argued had proved that Mr Howard interfered far more actively in operational matters than he had so far admitted, says that to transfer Mr Marriott to other duties would "almost inevitably be seen as a fudge".

Mr Straw said: "What these minutes show, for all the bluster of the Tories opposite, is that Mr Howard himself raised the issue of suspension."

Mr Howard also repeatedly

refused to answer questions from Mr Straw and Mr Blair on whether Mr Lewis had objected to the transfer on that day and had been overruled by the Home Secretary. The allegation, repeated on *Channel Four News* by Mr Lewis, is in the writ

"The Home Secretary is not merely secure in his job; after days of being muttered about by Tory MPs as a liability, he has become their hero"

- Andrew Marr, page 2

repeatedly interrupted speech. Mr Straw was jeered by the Tory benches when he declined to answer a question on whether he supported the decision to sack Mr Lewis after the Learmont report.

Mr Howard steered the debate away from the details of his encounters with Mr Lewis on to the safer, wider territory of Tory law and order policy, and told the Commons: "I have been accused of intervening. Yes I have. I make no apologies for it. I intervened to cut back home leave by 50 per cent. As a direct result, home leave failures have fallen by 80 per cent."

Mr Howard said Mr Blair "and his sidekick Mr Straw have shown themselves utterly unfit for government. I invite this House to reject them and their motion with the utter contempt it deserves."

Second resignation, page 2

Leading article, page 20

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IN BRIEF

Siamese twins die

Chloe and Nicole Astbury, the Siamese twins who were born joined from chest to navel, died yesterday, just days after doctors discussed the possibility of their going home. The twins died within five minutes of each other after they succumbed to bowel disease. Page 8

Equality prescribed for men

The Government bowed to a European Court equal rights ruling yesterday by giving free prescriptions to men at 60, the same age as women, at a cost of £40m a year. Ministers rejected the option of raising women's age of entitlement to 65 and avoiding spending the money. Page 6

Kozyrev faces sack

Boris Yeltsin, struggling to shore up his presidency, said he plans to sack Andrei Kozyrev, his Foreign Minister, as soon as he can find a replacement. Russian hardliners have accused Mr Kozyrev of selling out to the West. Page 15

Trafalgar hits back

Trafalgar House, the embattled owner of the Q&E, attacked rumours that its largest shareholder was poised to withdraw support following a collapse in its shares in recent days. Page 22

Robbery gang foiled

Italy has cancelled a decree under which terminally ill criminals are immune to prosecution. The ruling ends the exploits of a band of AIDS-infected Turin bank-robbers. Page 14

COMMENT

News analysis: The Astbury Siamese twins - a story of hope, sadness and lousy luck. Page 19

Polly Toynbee: The Pill is still a woman's best friend. Page 21

Helen Wilkinson wonders whether black women can really wait for their menfolk to sort themselves out. Page 21

Another view: the Chief Scout defends the memory of Lord Baden-Powell. Page 20

Wilkes's diary: Major's heir-apparent. Page 19

Weather: Southern regions will be bright at first but rainy later. Northern regions will have showers to start but will clear up later. Scotland will be fine but cold. Section Two, page 33



news

Jails controversy: Non-executive director quits in protest at Lewis sacking but Howard passes Commons test

Prison Board hit by new resignation

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A second member of the Prison Service's management team yesterday quit in protest over the sacking of Derek Lewis, the director-general.

Urmila Banerjee told the Home Secretary she thought the dismissal of Mr Lewis was not in the best interest of the service and nor did she agree with many of the recommendations in the Larmont inquiry into the escape from Parkhurst prison, which led to his sacking.

The resignation from the

Prison Board of Mrs Banerjee, a director of British Telecom, came as Judge Stephen Tunin, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, described the Larmont report as "flawed and dangerous". The judge said the report's primary conclusion that security should override all other penal policy considerations was "quite wrong".

The current Prison Service statement places security alongside humanity and rehabilitation. But Sir John Larmont has concluded that custody must come before consideration of care and control. Judge Tunin

said: "I strongly disapprove of placing security above humanity. What kind of message is that giving to those in the service? It is extremely dangerous. Would it mean that anything was justified to stop someone going over the wall?"

The departure of Mrs Banerjee follows the protest resignation on Wednesday of Geoffrey Keays, a director of the Prudential insurance company. And a question mark hangs over the future of a third - and arguably most influential member - Sir Duncan Nichol, the former chief executive of the NHS.

Angry letters fired off last week by Sir Duncan - reprinted here - warned the Home Secretary that to sack Mr Lewis would be "severely damaging" to the service. He also questioned the "bias" of the Larmont findings and says its summary of his involvement is a "serious distortion".

Sir Duncan is currently working in Spain and last night was not available for comment. The fourth non-executive board member, Bill Bentley, has said he will not resign but he did express his support for Mr Lewis.

His vacancies will be filled by Mr Howard who appoints all the directors of the board - the six executive, operation directors and four advisory, non-executive.

In her letter to Mr Howard, Mrs Banerjee wrote: "I am writing to advise you that, after careful consideration, I have decided to resign my position as a non-executive director of the Prison Board. After five-and-a-half years this has not been an easy decision."

"However, as I indicated in my letter to you of October 12, I cannot support the view of the

performance of the Prisons Board taken by General Sir John Larmont nor many of the recommendations in his report.

"Also, I feel that the dismissal of Mr Lewis was not in the best interest of the Prison Service."

Quartermaster General, listened too intently to the "front line troops" and believed too little credit was given in the report for change that was taking place within the service.

"That is not to say that everything was fine with the Service, and would have been if Derek Lewis had been allowed to continue for two or three more years. Fundamental problems that Mr Lewis was bequeathing to the service were a climate of fear in industrial relations and an undue emphasis upon incentives as a tool of prison management," he said.

The curious case of the royal bedroom

STEPHEN GOODWIN

For all Michael Howard's storming performance in yesterday's prison crisis debate, it was a humble backbencher, Chris Mullin, who pointed out the change in political ethics the affair seems to illustrate.

During a testy Prime Minister's Question Time preceding the debate, Mr Mullin asked if John Major recalled the occasion on which a man was found in the Queen's bedroom.

Whether or not MPs recalled Michael Fagan's Buckingham Palace intrusion on July 1982 most of them roared with laughter and there were mummings of "Prince Phillip". But Mr Mullin, justice campaigner and Labour MP for Sunderland South, was on to a serious point.

"Does the Prime Minister recall that the then Home Secretary, Lord Whitelaw, who I think we can call a gentleman of the old school, immediately offered his resignation?"

"Was Lord Whitelaw wrong? Could he have said it was an operational matter and none of his business?"

Mr Major did not tell the House whether he recalled the time in the Queen's bedroom, but all of his replies and Mr Howard's blistering arguments were to the effect that Lord Whitelaw was indeed wrong.

The Home Secretary dismissed Labour's charge that he had pressurised Derek Lewis, the former director-general of the Prison Service, over the removal of the governor of

Parkhurst as a "cheap and tawdry attempt to make petty party political capital" out of the difficulties of the service.

And he accused Tony Blair, who had again tackled Mr Major on the affair, of "allowing himself to be used as the vehicle for the spleen of a bitter man".

With help of Tory backbenchers and a poor performance by Jack Straw, his Labour opposite number, Mr Howard won the day. He was watched from one end of the public gallery by his wife, Sandra, and from the other by John Marriott, the ex-governor of Parkhurst prison.

At the close of the noisy, debate Labour's motion deploring the unwillingness of the Home Secretary to accept responsibility for serious operation failures of the Prison Service was defeated by 280 votes to 231.

Mr Straw struggled with the aid of minutes from a meeting between Mr Howard and officials in the wake of the Parkhurst escape to try and prove that Mr Howard wanted Mr Marriott suspended where as Mr Lewis only wanted him moved.

According to the minutes, the Home Secretary "wondered whether it was right for Mr Marriott to be moved to other duties as distinct from being suspended from duty".

Mr Straw told the House that Mr Lewis had said he came under "intense pressure" to agree to suspension - greater than he had ever known to change a decision "properly his".

Howard escapes to victory

ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

This wasn't a debate. It was an evocation; in little over an hour yesterday afternoon Labour's attack on Michael Howard was ripped to pieces and bloodily trampled on the floor of the chamber. It had looked as if it was going to be one of the Government's worst days in the Commons. Instead it was one its best, for years.

Conservative MPs were milling about afterwards in a state of rare over-excitement, informing anyone who passed that Tony Blair had peaked, that this was the turning-point. That's going to be a bit; these debates matter less to voters than MPs care to admit. But it would be surprising if Blair, Jack Straw and his closest aides were not already engaged in an agonised post-mortem examination.

The Home Secretary is not merely secure in his job; after days of being muttered about by Tory MPs as a liability, he has become their hero. He is safe

as houses and, come to think of it, rather safer than prisons.

Paraphrasing the words used by Iain Macleod in his famous attack on Nye Bevan - "I want to deal closely and with relish with the vulgar, crude and intemperate speech to which the House has just listened" - Howard performed brilliantly, turning all the rhetoric about high offices being demeaned and men being unfit for government he's suffered back on Blair and Straw. His voice trembled with emotion. His finger stabbed.

He was most affecting. One was reminded of a story told by

the late Sir Nicholas Fairbairn QC who, after using all his oratorical skills to get a man accused of murder acquitted, was approached by his tearful client. The man grasped him and said: "Ach, Mr Fairbairn, that was wonderful. For a moment there, I almost thought I hadn't done it myself."

Labour, as the prosecution, had however made two tactical errors. First, they played the man, without quite enough evidence, instead of concentrating on the main points of public concern, the condition of the prisons, and the erosion of accountability. Secondly, they had not decided whether Derek Lewis was a martyr or an incompetent fool - whether he should have been sacked or not.

So the Tory hecklers weighed in mercilessly.

Tony Blair did his best to prompt with further questions. As Labour's attack fell apart, the party's senior spin doctor quietly departed from the press

gallery. I didn't think the Home Office officials in their box in the chamber looked too happy, either.

Howard's parliamentary triumph leaves an important question about how the country is run unresolved by Parliament. The relationship between ministers and agencies has been exposed, yet again, as unacceptably vague. In essence he has got away with taking credit, but not blame, for what happens in the penal system.

His distinction between policy and operations, fought yesterday through obscure minutes and faxes, is not tenable. This is a gap in proper accountability through which ministers will continue to skip whenever things go wrong.

Meanwhile, the chattering classes have been badly beaten up by the parliamentary Conservative Party - which is after all, the story of the past 16 years.

Mr Straw said it was well known that Mr Howard "wanted Mr Marriott's head" and wanted to present it to the House that afternoon.

Mr Howard used the same 10 January minute to try and draw precisely the opposite conclusion to that of Mr Straw. Announcing that he was taking the exceptional step of releasing the official note, he said it showed it was Mr Lewis who decided that the governor of Parkhurst should be moved.

"I was entitled to be consulted by Mr Lewis about this

important matter, and I was. I was entitled in the course of that consultation to explore alternatives as I did."

Pressed on whether he had set a deadline for Mr Lewis, Mr Howard said he had to make a statement to the Commons that afternoon. Of course there had to be a deadline.

Cheered on by Tory backbenchers, Mr Howard had almost completed his lawyerly demolition of Mr Straw and Labour's case when Tony Blair

intervened, claiming Mr Howard had wanted Mr Marriott suspended and wanted it done immediately.

He challenged the Home Secretary to allow those who received the instruction to move Mr Marriott to give evidence as to what they were told by the Home Office.

But Mr Howard said the intervention cast the most serious questions on Mr Blair's judgement. "If there were any evidence required that the Labour Party is unfit to govern we have seen it here this afternoon."

'The report is a distortion'

11 October, 1995
Richard Wilson,
Home Office

These are extracts from the letters Sir Duncan Nicol sent to the Home Office

right of access arrangements under which we were appointed ... Yours sincerely,
Duncan

13 October
Richard Wilson,
Home Office

Dear Richard,
The purpose of this further note is not to debate the bias of the Larmont report which underestimates the achievements of the Prison Service under the leadership of the Director General. ... The underlying issue is whether, speaking for the non-executive members of the Prison Board, we have confidence in the Director General to carry through successfully and urgently the major change programme on which the Agency

has embarked. The primary challenge is managerial ... This requires further clarification at all levels of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. We crucially need a better way to assess the performance of individual prisons and individuals in key management positions.

We believe that this work is well in hand and is being purposefully directed. There was never a more important point in time to support the Director General ...

This is not a simple "command and control" organisation and badly needs the general management skills appropriate to comparable public and private sector businesses. Derek Lewis has these skills and our confidence.

It is very regrettable that ... it may not be possible for non-executives to make their representations direct to the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,
Duncan

IN BRIEF

Murder case against mother dropped

A judge yesterday ordered two charges against a mother accused of harming two of her children who died to be dropped.

After hearing submissions from the defence, Mr Justice Garland said the charge against Celia Beckett, 34, of murdering Tracey Butler, four, and of causing grievous bodily harm to five-month-old Clare should be dropped. Mrs Beckett, of Newark, Nottinghamshire, is still charged with manslaughter of Tracey, who was allegedly given 23 anti-depressant tablets, and with child cruelty and administering a noxious substance to a third daughter, Debbie, seven. The case continues today.

Nuclear station fire

A fire broke out at a nuclear power station in Hartlepool, Cleveland. Nuclear Electric said the blaze was in a non-nuclear section of the plant, radioactive material was not involved and there had been no leak of radiation. One reactor was shut down. There were no casualties.

Military explosion

Two people were injured, one seriously, in an explosion at a military experimental establishment at West Freugh, Dumfries and Galloway, which specialises in aircraft weapons systems trials. The Defence Evaluation and Research Agency said the victims were civilian technical personnel.

Husband charged

The husband of Eve Howells, 48, who was bludgeoned to death at her home in Huddersfield on 31 August, has been charged with her murder. David Howells, 47, will appear at Huddersfield magistrates' court today. Two brothers, 14 and 15, have already been charged with her murder.

'Spectator' editor

Frank Johnson, now a deputy editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, was named as the new editor of the *Spectator* magazine, replacing Dominic Lawson who is to edit the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Poison vet appeals

Ryan James, 41, a vet who was jailed for life for poisoning his wife with horse drugs so he could start a new life with his mistress, has won leave to appeal against his murder conviction. Sandra James, 39, of Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, died last January.

Seaside evacuation

Dozens of homes were evacuated after a 1,600lb German Second World War bomb was brought ashore by a fishing boat at Hythe, Kent. Experts from the bomb disposal unit at Portsmouth defused the device.

Water firms rapped

Southern Water, Thames Water and Yorkshire Water were criticised in a report by the water companies' regulatory Ofwat for the way they dealt with customer complaints. They were particularly "resistant to making financial redress for anything other than actual loss or damage".

Scott photos sold

Three albums of more than 800 photographs of Captain Scott's Antarctic expedition, which ended in death in 1912, were sold for £38,250 at a Christie's auction.

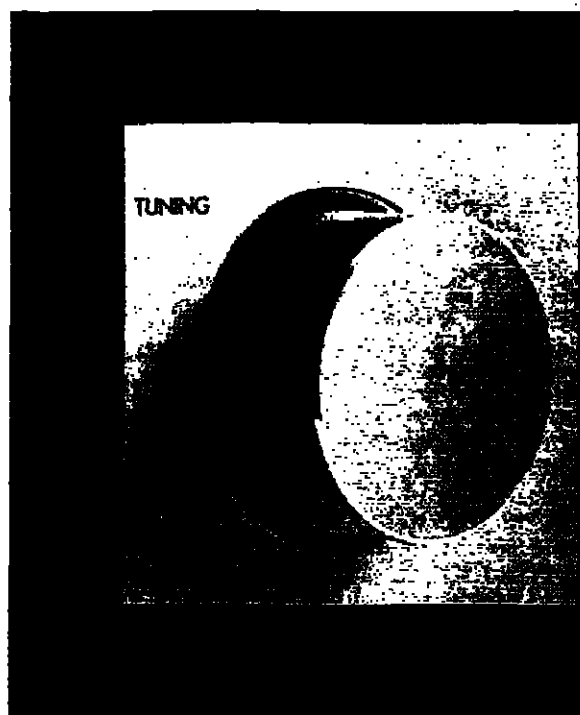
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Cyprus	£34.20	Norway	£4.00
Denmark	£34.15	Portugal	£3.25
Irish Rep	£34.15	Spain	£3.25
France	£34.15	Sweden	£3.20
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Dangers of the Pill: Thirty-five years since the new oral contraceptives offered freedom, experts have discovered a new peril

Women still haunted by the risk factor

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Thirty-five years after the oral contraceptive Pill was first linked with blood clotting, women are today facing new concerns about this potentially fatal side-effect.

The anxiety of more than a million women – and their partners – will be heightened by the knowledge that the combined oral contraceptive brands implicated in this latest Pill scare, are the very ones they have been encouraged to take since the late 1980s. But three separate studies have shown that the risk of blood clot is twice that of other brands.

These Pills were said to be safer because they contained a far lower dose of oestrogen than earlier Pills – supposedly reducing the risk of blood clots. In 1968 in Britain the Dunlop Committee had established beyond doubt a connection between oestrogen and clotting.

The newer, "safer" brands are the product of millions of pounds of research over three decades and yet when asked yesterday why they should in fact carry an increased risk of thrombosis, Professor Michael Rawlins, chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, which has issued a warning letter to all doctors and pharmacists about them, could only answer: "We don't know. There are a number of theories..."

One theory is that the synthetic progestogens (a female hormone) in the combined Pills – either gestodene or desogestrel – makes the oestrogen component of the Pill more potent, and therefore more likely to cause clotting. German scientists were the

first to raise concerns about gestodene, particularly in relation to a popular brand of the Pill, sold as Femodene in the UK, and available since 1987. The drug, made by Schering Health Care Limited, is taken by an estimated 400,000 British women.

Guide to the contraceptives

Women using these pills should continue to take them but should see their doctor before starting their next cycle to discuss whether a change of pill is necessary.

Femodene
Femodene ED
Minulet
Tri-Minulet
Marvelon
Microgynon

Women taking these pills are advised to need to change.

Ovranette
Microgynon
Trinordiol
Logynon
Ovovion
Brevinor
Trinovum
Synphase
Norimin
Neocon

Research by Professor Peter Schoenhofer, a contraceptive expert, had found as early as 1989 that when compared with another Pill, Femodene showed a three times greater risk of clot formation in the leg; six to seven times more risk of clot for-

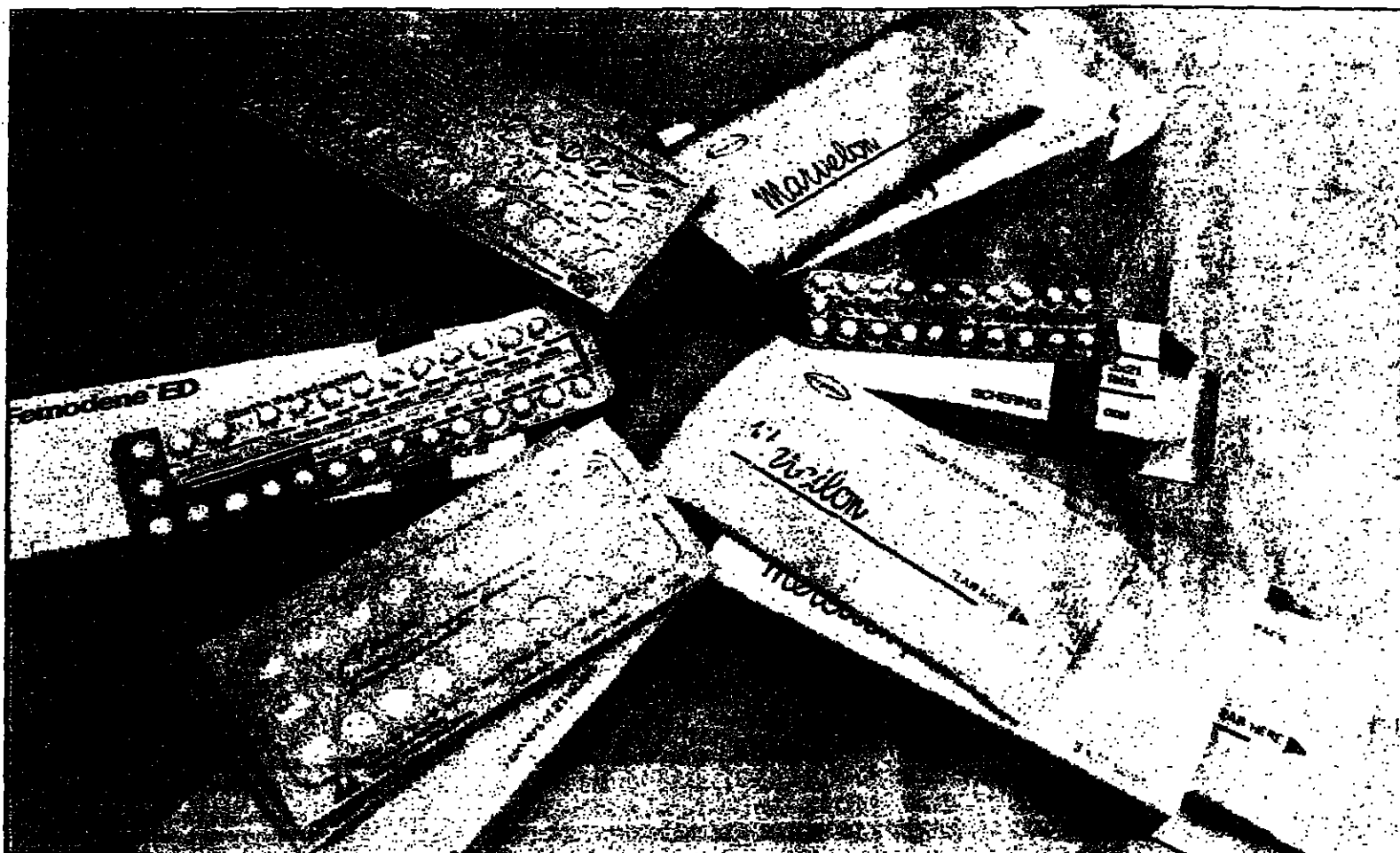
mation in the lungs; and 10 to 12 times more risk of damage to blood vessels in the brain. Other studies by researchers in Liverpool and Ontario subsequently refuted Professor Schoenhofer's claims.

However, the incidence of blood clotting related to gestodene-containing Pills in Germany rose in 1989 and 1990. Drug companies blamed this on press and media attention, and a letter to doctors from the German Ministry of Health requesting reports on clotting incidents related to this group of Pills. This had "stimulated reporting" by doctors and, the manufacturers claimed, when publicly subsidised, the adverse reporting rate returned to its pre-1989/1990 level.

But concern about Femodene continued to grow in Germany and here, particularly after a number of deaths and disabling injuries related to its use in previously healthy young women. The Department of Health, which had been aware of the German research, looked again at Femodene in 1994 but concluded there was no cause for anxiety. The message was that an unplanned pregnancy posed greater risks to a woman's health than this or related Pills.

In February this year, Sir Montague Levine, a coroner in Southwark, south London, said he would write to the CSM, Schering, and the Department of Health urging them to give greater emphasis to possible side-effects of the on Pill packets.

This followed an inquest into the death of Beverley Marsh, from Barnstaple, who died in December last year, just two days before her 21st birthday, and only two months after be-



Potential danger: Lower levels of oestrogen were said to make the Pill safer as it lessened the possibility of blood clots

ing prescribed Femodene. She suffered blood clots in the lungs. At the inquest her mother pointed out that warnings about the risk of clotting appear in tiny print on page 41 of the 51 page booklet in the Pill packet.

The Marsh case is one of an

estimated 45, involving relatives of women who have died after taking Femodene or suffered some injury, and are suing Schering. Other Femodene-related fatalities have included Sarah Mitchell, 18, a legal secretary from Lowestoft, who died of a blood clot blocking the

main heart artery after taking the drug for three weeks. Dawn Watson, 19, and one of the first users of Femodene died in 1988.

Shortly after her death, a young mother, Terri Midgley, 18, was partially blinded by bleeding in her eye while tak-

ing Femodene. Other deaths among users of other combined pills including Minulet and Marvelon are Ann Pratt, 26, a teacher from Dudley who died in 1989, and 16-year-old Lisa Smith from Telford, who died in 1990.

After the screening of a

World In Action programme in July this year on the health dangers of the Pill, the manufacturers have been writing to GPs refuting the claims made and urging them not to stop prescribing the gestodene or desogestrel-containing brands in an effort to shore-up market share.

Fatal prescription that took a young life

Clare Garner reports on how the Pill killed a 22-year-old



Rachael Ashbrook: Collapsed weeks after going on Pill

Rachael Ashbrook was a healthy young woman who did not smoke, drink or have "any problems whatsoever". At 22 she was prescribed the contraceptive pill Femodene. Within four months she was dead.

At first Rachael's family thought her sudden death was "one in a million". Yesterday's announcement confirmed it had been no freak incident.

In May 1991 Rachael went on holiday to Cornwall. After climbing St Michael's Mount she collapsed. "She appeared to be having some sort of fit," said her brother, Wayne, 35. "Passers-by tried to revive her but at one point one of them said she had died and they lost her. She stopped breathing. She was taken to Truro hospital and put on a ventilator. At this point her heart was fluctuating. She was drifting out of life and death."

The intensive care unit con-

tacted her family. "They told us they didn't know why it had happened but that her heart had stopped beating," said Wayne.

"That was on the Sunday and by Wednesday they had taken her off the ventilator. She could breathe unaided but that was all she could do. She was fed by a drip and they said she had extensive brain damage."

Rachael was transferred to a hospital near her home, the Countess of Chester, in Cheshire, where she died six weeks later. An inquest concluded death was caused by pulmonary embolism.

It was only then that the truth started to emerge. "There is no history of heart problems in the family," said Wayne. "There was no connection made with the Pill until afterwards when the consultant at the hospital wrote to my mother to explain

things. His exact words were that death was almost certainly contributed to by usage of the Pill. My sister's GP told my mother had she not been on the Pill she would be alive today."

Rachael had just started a job as an office clerk at a packaging company in the Wirral. Previously she had studied business at Chester College. "Everybody who knew her liked her. She was beautiful, intelligent and sensible. She had a strong sense of justice and fairness. If she felt someone had been wronged she would campaign on their behalf," said Wayne.

Rachael's mother, Sylvia, 60, broke down when she heard the Government's announcement yesterday. "I can't say that the news brings everything back because it's never away from us. It's a daily thing. I feel bitter that Rachael's life was cut off at such

an early age but we've done everything we can to stop that Pill and save other girls' lives."

"Just because the company was making money it wouldn't listen to ordinary people. If there was any doubt about the Pill it should have been banned immediately."

When Mrs Ashbrook looks at Lorraine, her younger daughter, she sees aspects of Rachael. Lorraine is now the age that Rachael was when she died.

Last year a Bradford-based solicitor, Rosalie Houghton, who represents similar cases, contacted the Ashbrook family. It was too long after Rachael's death to take legal action but all they wanted was to get the drug off the market.

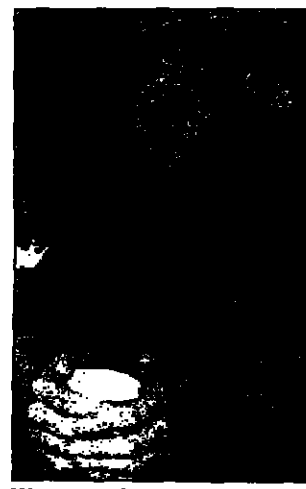
"We had been given the impression that Rachael's death was one in a million. We didn't realise there were so many sim-

ilar cases and that seemingly it was this type of Pill that was doing it. The evidence is overwhelming," said Wayne.

After her death Rachael's mother kept all her possessions, including her bag from her final holiday. She did not go through them because it would have been too upsetting.

"When Wayne raised the question of which Pill Rachael had taken I was able to take out the Femodene," said Mrs Ashbrook. "Obviously it was a nightmare at first. Eventually it has turned to anger."

In August Schering, the company that makes Femodene, were represented on a World In Action inquiry into the scandal. "To hear the Schering man coming on television saying he has no qualms about the Pill being safe and then the news today makes you angry," said Mrs Ashbrook. "It's very frustrating. It finally reached a pitch when



Wayne Ashbrook: 'Rachael was beautiful and sensible'

they could no longer ignore it but in that time more women have lost their lives."

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مركز العمل

news

AMNESTY WEEK 15-22 OCTOBER

The West trial: As jurors visit alleged murder scene, publishers cast doubt on value of biography

Silent jury visits Cromwell Street

WILL BENNETT

The jury which will decide whether Rosemary West is guilty of murder walked in silence yesterday through 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, where the remains of nine of her alleged victims were found.

The eight men and four women moved in single file through the rooms where Mrs West and her husband Frederick lived for 22 years and where the prosecution alleges that they terrorised victims. Outside, neighbours hung out of their windows to try to see what was happening and journalists gathered on the pavements as they had done in February last year when the Cromwell Street murder inquiry began.

Mrs West, 41, is charged with murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street and at the Wests' previous home in Gloucester. She denies the charges. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on 1 January.

The prosecution alleges that seven of the victims were gagged, tied up and kept alive while they were sexually abused. They were mutilated and dismembered before being buried at 25 Cromwell Street.

The jury had unanimously asked to travel from Winchester, where the trial is taking place, to Gloucester to look at the house. Mr Justice Mantell



Grim duty: The jury arrives at 25 Cromwell Street yesterday, shielded from public view

Photograph: John Voos

agreed to their request despite misgivings about the trip.

The judge feared that because the house is small the jury would not be able to view it simultaneously. There was also concern that jurors might be photographed. Before they left

Winchester in a coach in which the curtains were kept drawn the judge told the jury: "You must not talk about the case either during the view or coming and going [because] you are not all together." The jury set out on the two-hour journey escorted by police motorcyclists and a patrol car.

The jury's bus drove straight into the rear entrance to Cromwell Street and into a huge marquee which had been erected to cover the garden and the alley to one side of the

house. It shielded the jurors from television cameras in three helicopters hovering overhead. Sergeant Peter Maund, a search expert, took 20 minutes to guide the jury through the house, starting at the top and moving down to the cellar

where the remains of five young women were found earlier this year. The site of each grave was marked by white tape with a name printed on a card.

Brian Leveson QC, prosecuting, Sacha Wass, junior defence counsel for Mrs West, and Detective Superintendent John Bennett, who led the murder inquiry, also went round the house. Mr Justice Mantell went to Cromwell Street but did not go in with the jury.

Earlier this week the judge granted leave for Mrs West to be excused from going to the house. Richard Ferguson QC, defending, had told the court: "It was for many years the family home and it would be unduly distressing."

Both No 25 and No 23 next door lie empty. A campaign to buy and demolish them and create a memorial garden has already raised £13,000.

A bouquet of carnations and roses lay outside No 25 yesterday. It was from Ann Marie Davis, Mr West's daughter by his first marriage who told the court on Wednesday that her father and stepmother had repeatedly sexually abused her.

It commemorated Heather West, the couple's eldest daughter whose remains were the first to be found at Cromwell Street and said: "Though the years have passed you are always in my heart." Heather would have been 25 last Tuesday.

The trial resumes at Winchester today.

Fred West film rights may be sold for estate

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Reporter

The Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, who commissioned the official biography of Fred West on behalf of the estate of the Gloucester builder, will have to consider whether to sell the tapes of the police interviews.

The estate also contains the valuable asset of the film rights in Fred West's handwritten autobiography, entitled *I Was Loved By An Angel*, which could be sold to Hollywood for a substantial sum.

Mr Harris is acting on behalf of West's children and is required to "maximise" profits of the dead man's estate. West

hanged himself in Winson Green prison, Birmingham, on New Year's Day without making a will. Any money accruing from the estate will go to his wife, Rosemary, who has said she will not keep the money - and to his eight surviving children.

It is not clear whether Mr Harris intends to leave what would undoubtedly be a public outcry by selling the film rights or the 132 police tapes which are Rosemary West's property under inheritance laws.

However, according to statements he has made regarding his duty to make as much money from the estate as possible, he may feel obliged to do so.

One of the prime assets of the estate has been assumed to be West's autobiography, but publishers who were offered the chance to publish the "official" biography yesterday threw doubt on its value.

The promise of exclusive access to the 100-page memoir was a key selling point in the controversial deal brokered by Mr Harris, for which Hodder Headline agreed to pay a "six figure sum" - possibly about £250,000 - two weeks ago.

But a publisher who turned down the chance to buy the biography, to be written by the former *Times* journalist Geoffrey Wansell, said: "One wasn't going to be allowed to see any

of the material which Fred West had written, but I understood it to be very illiterate."

She said she asked the literary agency whether the manuscript dealt specifically with the alleged killings, and was told that it did not, but it "described the women he had known in his life - his mother, sisters and his first wife."

She had turned down the opportunity to bid also because she felt "uncomfortable" about the whole project. Her first reaction had been, she said: "Why on earth is the Official Solicitor trying to make a great deal of money out of this?"

Peter Grose, of the publishers Peter Grose Ltd, also expressed the opinion that *I Was Loved By An Angel* was unlikely to illuminate Fred West's life.

The publisher who is bringing out his own first-person book about the case, written by Stephen and Mae West, two of Fred's children, said: "I am astonished that the autobiography is being put forward as a valuable literary document."

The letters by Fred West I have read are rambling and incoherent. You practically need an interpreter to understand them."

The Gloucester builder had a very poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar, he added.

Another publisher who was offered the chance to bid said:

"It was obviously going to be the official biography. I just didn't want to get involved."

Brian Masters, the author of a biography about the killer Dennis Nilsen, and who is now working on a book about the psychology of Fred West, said he felt unable to comment on the deal.

But Virginia Hill, who is also writing a book for the *Daily Star*, said that if she had known the Official Solicitor was seeking an author "I'd have applied myself." She added: "Jolly good luck to Geoffrey Wansell. I don't suppose they could have advertised in the *Guardian* - the response would have been absolutely overwhelming."



Goran was one of the first people in the former Yugoslavia to experience the nightmare of racial hatred. He never lived to tell the tale. Or did he?

Somehow you can tell just by looking at Goran that he was unlikely to be a desperado. He worked as an agricultural engineer in the small town of Vukovar, which before the conflict had a multi-ethnic population. In November 1991, the town was overrun by Serb paramilitaries. Goran and his mother hid with other terrified townsfolk in a large cellar.

But the paramilitaries dragged them out and took them to a 'clearing centre' where people of different religions and ethnic groups were made to stand apart. And where women were separated from the men.

This heartless 'selection' was the last time Goran's mother Ivanka saw her son. He was taken away in what was the first mass "disappearance" of former Yugoslavia.

Ivanka prays that her son is still alive and has tried without success to find out what became of him.

Since Goran vanished into the smoke of war, tens of thousands of other people in former Yugoslavia have simply "disappeared", leaving their families with an agony of hope and despair that can never die.

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Rare foray into legal limelight

A quiet man is at the centre of the Fred West row, writes Louise Jury

Ever since medieval times, there has been someone in the English justice system to look after the interests of children, the mentally ill, prisoners and others who cannot defend their legal rights.

The Lord Chancellor's Department points to this history to explain the role of the Official Solicitor today.

Fully titled the Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court, he is appointed by the Lord Chancellor but acts independently of him. He is answerable to judges, not the Government, in providing the professional services of a solicitor to people who cannot represent themselves.

Peter Harris took up the post two years ago. He had been the Circuit Administrator - the senior law official equivalent to a government under-secretary - in the northern circuit for the previous seven years, before beating off open competition for his new job.

The decision to arrange an official Fred West biography is said by some who know him to be a rare foray into the limelight.

"My reaction was one of surprise," said one. "I would not have associated him with doing anything rash, probably not



Peter Harris: Steady route to the top of profession

even anything daring. If he had, he would certainly have thought about it long and hard."

A small, dapper man, 58-year-old Peter Harris was educated at Cirencester Grammar School before training at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. He left the Royal Navy in 1972 at the rank of Lieutenant Commander to embark on a new career in the law.

After two years as a practising barrister, he joined the Lord Chancellor's Department, where he worked his way up through a variety of administrative and legal posts.

When David Venables retired in 1993, Mr Harris was the first Official Solicitor to have to fight external competition for a post previously filled from within government legal ranks.

Linford by Linford

An anonymous caller told the newspapers that my son had become a father at the age of 16. I was annoyed, I wanted to know why Merric had not taken precautions. It wasn't as if I hadn't talked to him about it. Ours has never been a father and son relationship in the true sense because I was not living with Merric as he grew up. But I had tried to become friends with him.



Read his autobiography, serialised exclusively in the Independent, from this Saturday

news

Equal rights: Ministers forced to comply with European directive after pensioner's two-year legal struggle

Men to get free prescriptions at 60

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

The Government bowed to a European Court equal rights ruling yesterday by giving free prescriptions to men at 60 – the same age as for women – at a cost of £40m a year.

Ministers had the choice of raising women's age of entitlement to 65, but decided not to risk the electoral unpopularity. Gerry Malone, the Health Minister, told the Commons he was complying completely with yesterday's ruling: there would be a further £10m to pay claims retrospectively over the last three months. Men can apply for their free prescriptions and refunds from today.

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, the state retirement age is now academic for many people; half of men are not in full employment when they reach 65.

The judgment upholds a 1979 European directive on sex equality and fuelled Tory Euro-sceptics' fury over what they see as unnecessary interference in Britain's right to set its own laws.

Tony Marlow, MP for Northampton North, called the decision an outrage: "I am not aware that a decision was ever made by the British people that a decision on who should or should not get free prescriptions should be made by a bunch of foreign judges."

Yesterday's ruling was a personal victory for Cyril Richardson,



Winning smile: Cyril Richardson after hearing yesterday's European Court judgment in his case to have free prescriptions given to men at 60

Photograph: Edward Sykes

son, 66, a former college lecturer from Walsall, who took the Government to court.

Mr Richardson said he was angry that he had to wait five years longer than his wife, Eyleen, for free prescriptions.

"It seemed to me a terrible injustice and I am delighted that it has been put right," he said.

Mr Richardson, who suffers from asthma, spends £50 a year on prescriptions, which currently cost £5.25 each.

The Government had already made provision to equalise the retirement age at 65 for both men and women between 2010 and 2020, and the prescription age will go up at the same time.

The directive gave states discretion to delay equal state pensions, but the EU court ruled yesterday that the equal provision of prescriptions could not be similarly exempted, because it was not "inextricably

linked" to the pension age. Since the directive came into force 10 years ago, men have had to pay the prescription charge until they are 65.

The Government had contested Mr Richardson's case

from the start, arguing that the British prescription charges system was not covered by the European directive.

It never disputed that the national rules amounted to sex discrimination.

Briton 'killed and then went to dinner'

STEVE VINES
Singapore

A Briton accused of murdering a tourist and chopping up his body spent the evening after the killing dining on fillet steak and a glass of wine, Singapore's High Court heard yesterday.

The following day John Martin Scripps, 35, is alleged to have bought a ticket for a concert by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. It is also claimed that he went on a shopping spree, buying a video recorder and some sportswear. All the purchases were made with the credit card of Gerard George Lowe, 32, a South African.

Mr Scripps, who is also known as John Martin, admits killing Mr Lowe, but says he did so unintentionally following what he thought to be a homosexual assault. He also claims that he went on a drinking and drug binge while a "British friend" disposed of the body.

However, the prosecutor, Jennifer Marie, yesterday presented a bill that placed Mr Scripps in the hotel coffee shop on the night of the killing. He denied that the signature, in the name of one of his aliases, was his. But a handwriting expert testified that it was. The prosecution also showed the court a copy of a concert programme found in his baggage at the time of his arrest.

The trial continues today.

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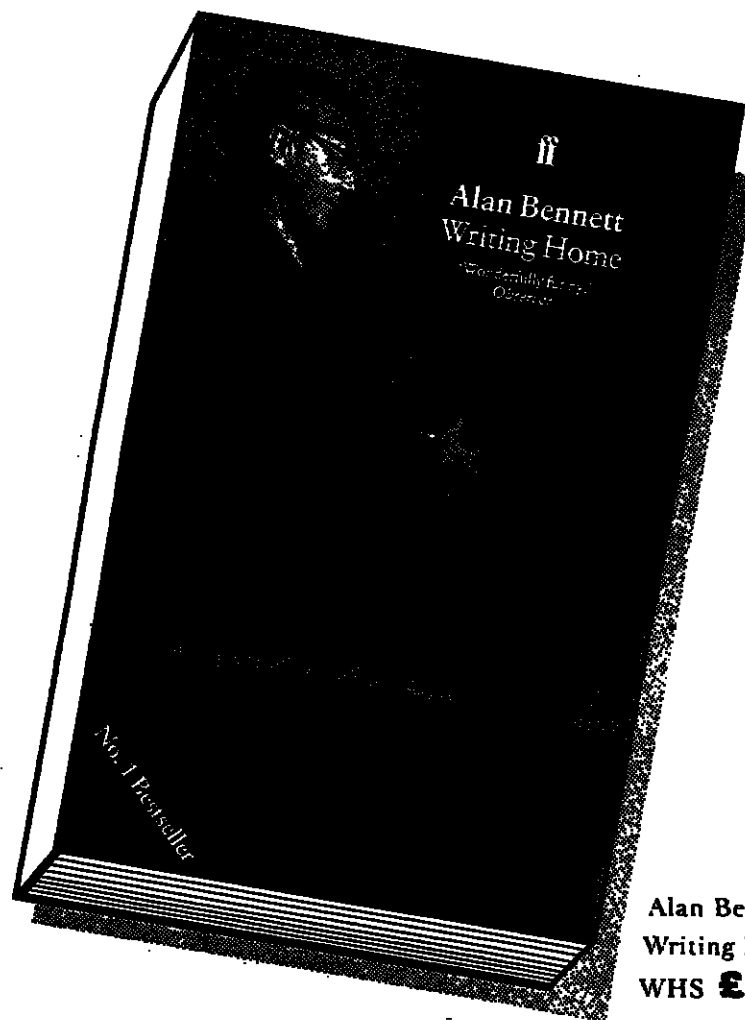
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مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Air pollution is 'not the cause of asthma epidemic'

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Air pollution is not the cause of the epidemic of asthma in adults and children, scientists said yesterday, and they warned that infections and allergens are more potent triggers of the disease.

A two-year independent inquiry has concluded that although air pollution may provoke acute asthma attacks or aggravate existing chronic disease, the effect is "generally small and... appears to be relatively unimportant" compared with other factors such as viruses, cigarette smoke, diet and house dust-mite droppings.

Professor Stephen Holgate, chairman of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air, which compiled the report, said that the strongest risk state for asthma was allergy and this was rising across the developed world.

"The real concern to the public is the rising trend in asthma," he said. "The important questions are what is driving the increase in allergies and why do they manifest themselves as airway disease... Outdoor air pollution seems not to be a particularly important cause [of asthma]."

The committee decided that

an outbreak of asthma in July 1994, following a period of hot weather and thunderstorms, was not related to an increase in air pollution, Professor Ross Anderson, a member of the committee, said.

"Every epidemic so far has been associated with greater concentration of allergens in the air. These allergens include biological pollutants such as pollen and fungal spores which were not considered by the committee, which focused instead on chemical pollutants," he said.

The inquiry team did find that pollution due to car and lorry emissions may pose an increased risk. Professor Anderson said: "People living close to streets with heavy traffic do appear to have a slightly increased risk."

Asthma has increased by an estimated 50 per cent in the last 30 years, and three million people - one million of them children - are sufferers. The disease has also increased in severity and the number of deaths from asthma has almost doubled since the 1970s to around 2,000 a year. Around 200,000 people are disabled by severe asthma.

Although asthma is regarded as a disease of urbanisation, the committee found "little or

no" association between the regional distribution of asthma and that of air pollution. A recent study from the Isle of Skye, where air pollution is believed to be minimal, showed as high a prevalence of asthma as anywhere else in the UK.

Professor Holgate said that other factors associated with urban living, such as crowding of houses and poor ventilation, and lifestyle changes, particularly smoking in pregnancy, diet of the pregnant mother and diet in early life were more significant.

Dr Kenneth Calman, the chief medical officer, said that air pollution remained an important problem because it made some asthmatics worse. Government research commitment to asthma was "intense", he said.

The National Asthma Campaign (NAC), said the report highlighted the need for more research into the causes of asthma. Melinda Letts, chief executive of NAC, said: "We hope the Government will continue to take seriously the impact of traffic pollution can have on some asthma patients."

The Friends of the Earth said the report confirmed the health effects of air pollution, and urged the Government to promote alternatives to cars and lorries.



Poisonous legacy: Beckton gasworks, in east London, waiting for a £1.5m clean-up, including removal of toxic oxide

Photograph: Brian Harris

Blackspot warnings go on the Internet

DANNY PENMAN and
NICHOLAS SCHOON

Friends of the Earth has placed a register of Britain's most polluting factories, gasworks, chemical plants and refineries on the Internet.

The database covers 1,000 sites in England and Wales and is taken from the Government's pollution inspectorate's chemical releases inventory, first published last year.

Disused gasworks, such as the site at Beckton, east London,

used in the film *Full Metal Jacket*, feature heavily, with more than 1,000 scattered around the country. Virtually all will be contaminated with substances used in the manufacture and purification of "town-gas" including various forms of cyanide, toxic heavy metals and phenolic compounds, some of which may be carcinogenic.

The sites became contaminated mainly through the purification plants which cleaned the gas. One of the worst contaminants is "Blue Billy", or

spent oxide. This material, often dumped on site, absorbed most of the noxious components in the gas.

Beckton is one of the most contaminated sites. Part of it has been redeveloped as a housing estate while the remainder is still owned by British Gas.

Debbie Tomlin, who lives on part of the redeveloped site, says she, her husband and two children all suffered from illnesses and skin rashes caused by contamination. "We've had soil tests done in our own garden

and at other places around the site. The bits that were contaminated they removed and they removed the soil from eight gardens," she said.

British Gas has made strenuous efforts to decontaminate the worst sites and reclaim the rest for housing and industry but they have been left frequently with a highly toxic legacy. They have done comprehensive surveys on most former gas works sites but refuse to reveal the results and claim it is commercially confidential information.

FoE hopes the new database will help force British Gas and other companies to reveal what they know about their land.

But Bob Bell, of SGS Environment, which advises local authorities and industry on decontaminating old gasworks, said he sympathised with British Gas's desire to keep information secret. "Morally it's right to disclose the information but it's just going to scare people. You need experts that have the necessary perspective to deal with the information," he said.



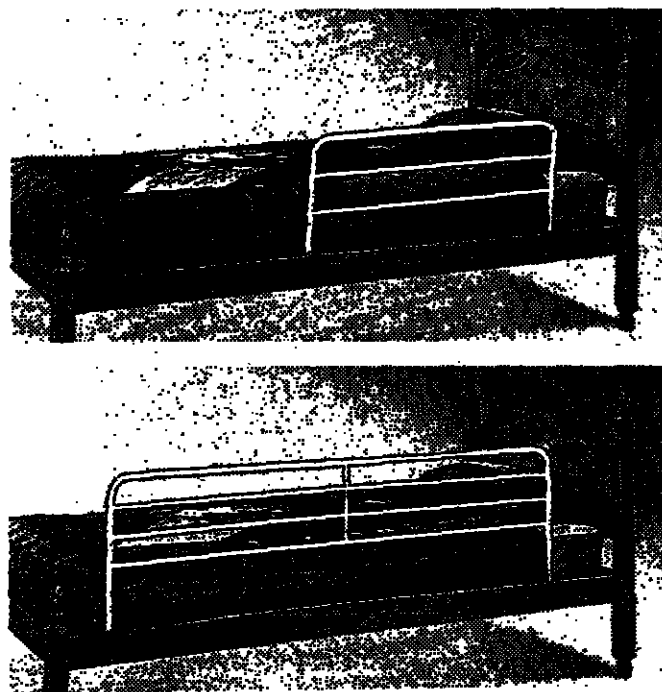
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(Page 601 Superstore Catalogue)

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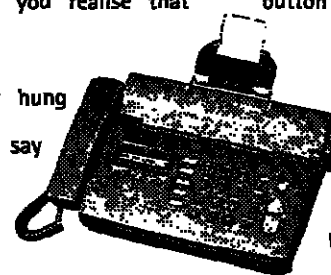
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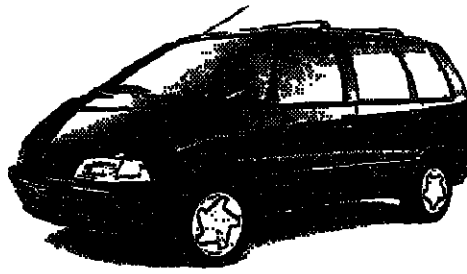
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news

Parents devastated as Siamese twins die of bowel disease

JOJO MOYES

Chloe and Nicole Astbury, the Siamese twins who were born joined from the chest to the navel, yesterday lost their fight for life, just days after doctors discussed the possibility of their going home.

The girls, who were born at St Mary's Hospital in Manchester, died within five minutes of each other early yesterday after succumbing to bowel disease.

They had survived a life-saving operation to separate a shared bowel after their birth on 14 September. But the health of both the twins had deteriorated rapidly since the beginning of the week, when Chloe contracted the bowel disease, known as neo-natal necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), which

spread to other vital organs. Alan Dickson, the consultant who had been treating them, said at a press conference yesterday: "The effects of the disease spread to both children. They had been going downhill on Monday and Tuesday. They were deteriorating as we were supporting them and doing what we could."

Mr Dickson added that the twins were put on life-support systems on Tuesday night, but they died "of their own accord". Nicole died before Chloe at about 1:40am. "To come through what they came through in the first 11 days of life and then to be hit with this out of the blue was extremely bad luck," he said.

Their parents Melanie and Brian Astbury, who also have a three-year-old son, had been

contacted at 12.45am and asked to come to the hospital. There the couple - who this week said they had "no regrets" about having the twins - were told that the girls would not live. Such was their shock and distress, Mr Dickson said, that they were unable to go in and say goodbye to their daughters.

"Melanie and Brian were full of hope and this turn of events was totally unexpected for them both," said Andrea McWatt, the couple's solicitor. "As you can imagine they are both devastated."

Until they contracted the bowel disease, doctors said the twins' progress had been "remarkable". Last week doctors had discussed with their parents the possibility of the twins being discharged from hospital.

News Analysis, page 19

Claudia's explosive entry lifts Chanel show



Show stopper: A huge globe opens to reveal Claudia Schiffer yesterday in Paris

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

TAMSI BLANCHARD
Paris

Security was stepped up yesterday morning at the Chanel show for Karl Lagerfeld's spring/summer '96 collection at the purpose-built catwalk theatre under the Carrousel du Louvre, Paris, after rumours of a bomb threat.

The celebrity count has been low this season because of the security checks and general tension in the city, following the recent wave of bombings.

Valentino, who has dressed Emma Thompson, Jamie Lee Curtis and Sharon Stone, presented his collection after Yves Saint Laurent on Wednesday with not even Joan Collins seated on the front row. Madonna turned up for Helmut Lang and John Galiano, neither of whom showed at the obvious terrorist target of the central Paris Carrousel du Louvre.

Chanel was rumoured to be a target because it is the best known fashion house in Paris. But the only hint of an explosion came when the huge globe at the end of the catwalk split in two to reveal Claudia Schiffer in a cloud of dry ice.

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Formal grammar classes 'can help boys catch up'

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

English teachers should concentrate more heavily on formal teaching such as grammar and spelling to help boys who lag behind their female classmates, according to the Government's leading curriculum adviser.

Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, told a conference in London yesterday that a new task force on the problem would consider whether different teaching methods might help boys to catch up. He said they might be encouraged by wider recognition of non-academic achievements such as community work.

In July, Dr Tate caused controversy when he condemned "watered down multi-culturalism" and said children should learn a strong sense of their

British identity. Yesterday, he said: "For as long as many of us can remember it has been widely accepted that there was a problem about girls' under-achievement. What is needed now is an acceptance that we face a similar challenge with boys, and especially with boys' attainment in English."

Dr Tate told a conference of the Basic Skills Agency, which aims to raise standards of literacy and numeracy, that a national rise in GCSE scores masked a growing gap between the performances of boys and girls. While just 12 per cent of girls now failed to gain a pass grade in English, the figure for boys was 17 per cent.

Put alongside figures for school exclusions, where boys outnumbered girls by four to one, and for entrance to special schools, where girls were only a small minority, the results

were evidence of a serious problem, he said.

A recent study by the Southampton Institute had found that only 9 per cent of boys in infant classes would rather read a good book than play a computer game or watch television, compared with 30 per cent of girls. Between the ages of seven and 11, more than half the girls questioned would choose a book compared with fewer than one in five boys.

Dr Tate said that an advisory group set up to tackle the issue will meet for the first time next week. It will look at the view that boys responded best to lessons which had a clear structure while girls liked empathetic, open-ended lessons. Teachers might be encouraged to employ a variety of methods designed to encourage both sexes, including the formal study of language, he added.

Tube line hit by 4-month closure

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Commuters on London Underground's Northern Line - dubbed the "misery line" - face disruption for four months when a key part of the line is closed next summer.

The southbound section through the City between Camden Town in north London and Kennington in south London

will be closed from July 1996 because of concern that the building works associated with the £1.9bn Jubilee Line extension at London Bridge could cause flooding. London Underground hopes that part of the line, between Camden and Moorgate, will reopen at some point during those four months.

Northbound trains will continue to run but will be subject to disruption and will probably

not stop at London Bridge. News of the closure has not been officially announced by London Underground but last night a spokeswoman confirmed that it would take place.

This is the second blow to commuters on the Northern Line after last week's closure, for eight months, of the King's Cross Northern Line platforms because of the refurbishment of a faulty escalator.

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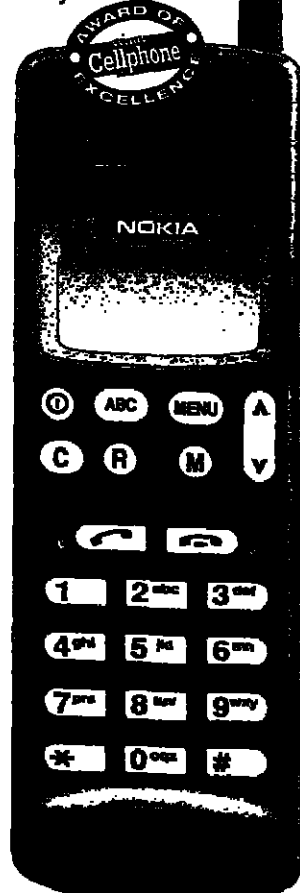
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Short takes on transport as Meacher is sidelined

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
and JOHN RENTOUL

Tony Blair took his revenge on Labour traditionalists yesterday, propelling the Shadow Cabinet newcomer Clare Short into the transport portfolio and sidelining her predecessor Michael Meacher after the backlash against new Labour in Wednesday's elections.

In what could be a protracted reshuffle, the Labour leader also set about a clear-out of front bench middle and lower ranks. Nine had reportedly been sacked or resigned last night in advance of an announcement on the junior posts today.

And another wave of "new" Labour appointments is expected over the weekend. Five of the 1992 intake currently serving as whips - Peter Mandelson, Barbara Roche, Estelle Morris, Geoff Hoon and Stephen Byers - will be promoted to junior shadow ministerial jobs.

Formerly in the vanguard of the "soft" left, Ms Short, the MP for Birmingham Ladywood, played a prominent role in the dumping of the left-winger Liz Davies as parliamentary candidate for Leeds North East. Mr Blair has rewarded her handsomely with the transport portfolio. She will handle the delicate task of defining what Labour means by its pledge to take the railways back into public ownership. Mr Meacher, her predecessor, was judged to have taken his definition too far. Appearing in brackets under David Blunkett in the shadow cabinet list released last night, Mr Meacher will be shadow employment secretary while Mr Blunkett will take the lead role of shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

The slap in the face will be

compounded by Mr Blair's expected decision to give responsibility for preparations for the minimum wage to a junior shadow minister under Mr Meacher, Ian McCartney. Mr Meacher, who was said to have turned down an alternative offer of shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, will be left with responsibility for unemployment figures, training and health and safety.

Wednesday's Shadow Cabinet elections saw Jack Cunningham, former shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, knocked off and Tom Clarke, a spokesman on disabled people's rights, who lost his place last year, reinstated against the odds. There were also increased votes for Mr Meacher, Joan Lester and Ann Taylor, while shadow Welsh Secretary Ron Davies rocketed from twelfth to fourth place. But none have secured promotion and Mr Blair has responded to the rebuff to Mr Cunningham by giving him the national heritage portfolio. Mr Cunningham, Derek Foster, formerly chief whip and now shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Andrew Smith, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, will be invited to attend Shadow Cabinet meetings on a regular basis.

Other high-level changes were confirmed yesterday. Margaret Beckett, who topped the poll, will take over trade and industry, while Harriet Harman, the former employment shadow, will take over the health portfolio from Mrs Beckett. Chris Smith, formerly national heritage, takes over the key social security portfolio from Donald Dewar, who becomes chief whip.

Tessa Jowell becomes spokesperson on women.

The Shadow Cabinet: A guide to key players



Margaret Beckett
Trade and industry
"Party hack and proud of it", a minister who became a fierce Bennite but was rehabilitated by John Smith, who preferred her as his deputy when he became party leader.
New Labour rating 0



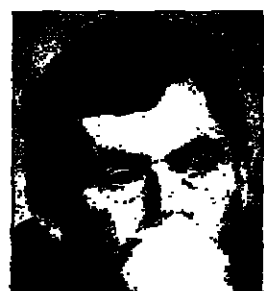
Robin Cook
Foreign affairs
Brilliant debater with cutting sarcasm, but long at or near the top of annual poll. Took over foreign brief last year, despite hankering after shadow chancellorship.
New Labour rating 2



Gordon Brown
Economic affairs
Has the most influence with Tony Blair and now bestrides economic policy-making machinery like a colossus. Skills as political strategist increasingly appreciated in the party.
New Labour rating 3



Ron Davies
Wales
Shockingly good performance in Shadow Cabinet poll for one written off as irredeemable traditionalist. Impressed with move to squash rises in allowances for Welsh councillors.
New Labour rating 1



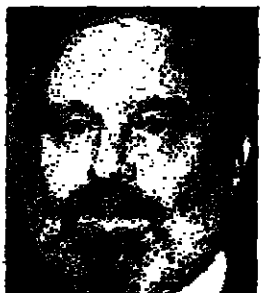
Donald Dewar
Chief Whip
Ultra-sharp mind, trained with John Smith at Glasgow law school, needed to manage passage of constitutional reform in government, including a Scottish parliament.
New Labour rating 2



Mo Mowlam
Northern Ireland
Blair supporter who managed his leadership campaign, and who cemented shift in Labour's stance on Northern Ireland away from the "logically-challenged" "unity by consent".
New Labour rating 3



Chris Smith
Social security
"Soft left" moderniser who played an important role in providing substance for Blair's Wilsonian technobabble. Now has to give substance to key theme of "responsibility" in welfare.
New Labour rating 3



Frank Dobson
Environment
Workhorse of TV studios and Westminster tea-rooms. No moderniser, although a robust pragmatist, he waged a well-timed summer campaign against leaky water companies.
New Labour rating 0



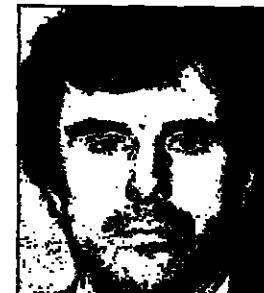
David Clark
Defence
Wholly unobtrusive politician who has put defence issue to sleep for Labour - to such an extent that, when conference voted to keep Trident younger members thought it uninteresting.
New Labour rating 0



Ann Taylor
Shadow Leader of House
Traditionalist of the old right who produced an education policy last year which failed to upset the National Union of Teachers and thus annoyed the new leader.
New Labour rating 0



David Blunkett
Education and employment
Christian socialist closest to Blair's "social moralism", who has succeeded in offending NUT activists; has fudged opt-out schools and excoriated Hattersley in Brighton.
New Labour rating 2



Gavin Strang
Agriculture
He was a surprise new face in last year's Shadow Cabinet, but is still widely unknown outside Westminster despite various photo-calls in defence of the doorstep pinta.
New Labour rating 0



Jack Straw
Home affairs
Student leftie who rose through Barbara Castle's office to become a centre-right moderniser. Expected to be an effective minister, with an imaginative grasp of the detail, although lacks presentational brio.
New Labour rating 3



Joan Lester
Overseas development
Old-time Tribune sustained in shadow cabinet by ancient loyalties and what some Blair supporters call "assisted-places scheme", adopting right-wingers' abuse aimed at compulsory votes for four women. Another ex-minister.
New Labour rating 0



Michael Meacher
Deputy to Mr Blunkett, responsible for employment
Once Tony Benn's "amissary on earth", the last time he held employment brief he was scorned by Kinnoch as "weak as water" and replaced with a rising favourite called Tony Blair.
New Labour rating 0



Clare Short
Transport
Stands out from the careful men in suits as a politician of blazing sincerity, but also shows astute judgement. Once suspicious of Blair, but has recently impressed him, particularly with Brighton speech.
New Labour rating 1



George Robertson
Scotland
European spokesman who managed a divided Labour Party through Maastricht debates with such skill that government was seriously disrupted. Rationalised the party's commitment to a Scottish parliament.
New Labour rating 2



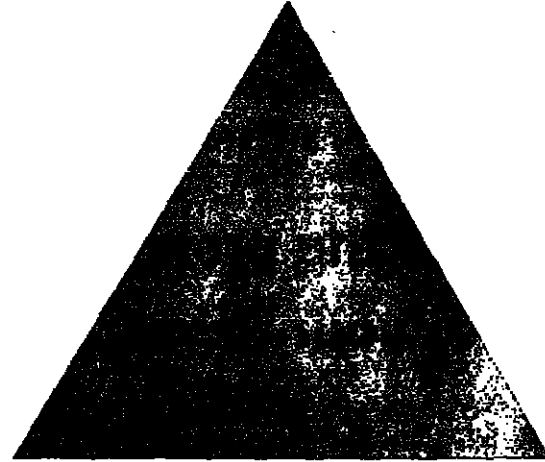
Harriet Harman
Health
Ultra-moderniser; a friend of Blair's wife before he was an MP. Victim of Labour MPs' suspicion of the "beautiful people" when voted off shadow cabinet in 1993. Will never be loved by grey "Old" Labour.
New Labour rating 3



Tom Clarke
Disabled people's rights
Former spokesman on Scottish affairs, not considered a success. Embarrassed Labour in the Monklands by-election. Devotes his life to canvassing for shadow cabinet elections among colleagues.
New Labour rating 0



Downpour.



Pour down.



news

Secret trade: MPs raise questions about transfusion service practices as commercial exploitation of volunteers is denied

Turks profit from British blood donors

LOUISE JURY
London
and HUGH POPE
Istanbul

Products made from freely donated blood in Britain are on sale abroad at huge profits.

A Turkish price list seen by the *Independent* provides the first evidence that money is being made out of blood provided by British volunteers, despite denials by the National Blood Authority (NBA), which runs the service.

The authority has claimed repeatedly that there is no commercial exploitation. Its blood products are sold overseas only occasionally, when there are surpluses, and to recover costs.

But the Turkish price list shows that the consumer price of the British-made Factor VIII, a clotting agent used for treating haemophiliacs, is four times the UK price, in a business operation which donors have not been consulted on.

At least part of the difference is understood to go to the Turkish government, which imposes a 10 per cent import tax, and in profits for the businessmen responsible for importing, storing and transporting the products.

Osman Karaomeroglu of Sodhan Medical Instruments Manufacturing and Trading Company, the licensed distributor for the British products in Turkey, said it was the common practice for the government to multiply the price of a foreign imported medicine two or three times.

A quantity (500 international units) produced by Bio Products Laboratory (BPL), the laboratory of the National Blood Authority, is available for £399 (31,522,748 Turkish lira)

compared to the UK price of around £90. Similar mark-ups appear on albumin, a by-product which is used to treat burns. Turkish government records show Factor VIII was exported by BPL at twice the price paid by at least some British hospitals.

Both donors and doctors expressed anger and concern yesterday. Donor Steve Goddard, 26, an Oxford University lecturer, said: "I would not be happy about the possibility of any private company making a profit

that even here, blood is being traded as a commodity internally within the NHS market. I have to buy blood products."

A spokeswoman for the National Blood Authority and Bio Products Laboratory said details of which blood products were sold abroad were "commercially confidential". The authority would not explain why blood products were apparently exported to Turkey at twice the UK price.

But although she insisted the NBA made no profit itself, she admitted the authority did not have control over what profits were made overseas.

"If you are a distributor, you have to make your living."

In the Commons, Nick Brown, Labour's health spokesman, said: "This may well be standard behaviour, standard practice, for a private, profit-driven firm in a competitive marketplace, but surely it has no place in an ethically-based public service whose overriding purpose is to meet the needs of patients?"

Gerry Malone, Minister of State for Health, said: "Price-setting outside the UK has nothing to do with the NBA and is not within the control of the Government."

But Alex Carlile, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, said: "I do not understand why the National Blood Authority cannot establish in its contracts of sale enforceable conditions to ensure that does not happen."

"It is quite normal for international contracts to contain restrictive conditions on what should happen to the product that is sold. It happens regularly with regard to defence material and I do not see why it should not happen in relation to blood."



Nick Brown: 'It has no place in a public service'

it, or of a government, particularly one with a human rights record like Turkey, taking a large whack. And I think it would put people off donating blood." Some donors have already withdrawn in protest.

Dr Paul Giangrande, a consultant haematologist who treats haemophiliacs, said: "If there is material left over, it comes from volunteer donors and it should be given, not sold."

"Most people don't realise



Taking it lying down: Donors have been dismayed to learn that their blood may have been used for export

Photograph: Andy Hall

Anger at deliberate use of 'surplus'

Louise Jury reports on a moral and economic dilemma

The Nuffield Council of Bioethics, which examines ethical questions in biological research, came out this year against commercial dealings in human blood. "What is freely given by donors should not be used to make a profit," it concluded.

Although subsidising UK supplies by selling surplus blood and blood products was not ruled out, it did not address the question of what happens to those surpluses when sold.

For the donors, that is the heart of the matter. Pauline Swan, 44, from Oxford, said: "I don't think that any donor in this country would be giving up their time to make profits for somebody else abroad."

Until recently, most donors did not know they were. They are still not routinely asked whether they might object. Mrs

Swan said she had only recently discovered where her blood went. "I've always assumed it's gone for use in this country."

But in the House of Commons last December, the Government admitted that sales had been taking place since before 1986 to recover costs.

As concern grew at this revelation, the National Blood Authority repeatedly stated: "Our charges are set at the level required to recover our costs. No profit is involved."

But the implications of the commercial sales operation were not explained to donors and many have been angered to discover an overseas mark-up.

Mrs Swan, a medical personnel worker, said she believed the assumption from

donors was that surpluses would go to health professionals, not businessmen.

And Dr Paul Giangrande, a consultant haematologist, said the National Blood Authority was disingenuous in arguing that the alternative to sales was destroying blood. Any excess should be given free to countries who needed it, not those who could pay, he said.

Two-thirds of the world's 180,000 haemophiliacs receive no treatment and many of BPL's rival pharmaceutical companies donate supplies to developing nations through the World Federation of Haemophiliacs.

Sue Kilroe, 33, a founder of the Merseyside and North Wales Patients and Donors As-

sociation, added: "It's just totally unacceptable the way they are going about it."

Blood service insiders claim that as sales began around a decade ago, surpluses could not have occurred by chance and commercial gain must have been in mind when the blood was collected, even if only to satisfy the Department of Health's demands that the service is self-financing.

One service worker said: "In these circumstances, there was a duty to give prior warning to donors that by-products of their blood might be sold."

An NBA spokesman explained whole blood was very rarely used, but parts - red cells, platelets and plasma products - were used as appropriate.

High demand in England and Wales for red blood cells has left plasma unused. If this was not sold, the NBA could not balance its books, as required by the Department of Health. But it did not believe people in Turkey would pay the full list price.

Turkey has to import blood products as it does not make them itself and regulations governing pharmaceutical products like Factor VIII mean they have to go through a licensed distributor, the spokesman said.

Asked why these arrangements had not been explained to donors, he asked: "Is there really a necessity to?"

Tessa Jowell, a Labour health spokeswoman, said: "I don't think there's necessarily any reason to assume that donors would object, but they ought to be told."

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مركز الادوية

Computer chips theft 'costing UK £1bn a year'

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

Theft of computer memory chips has reached "epidemic proportions" and is "escalating out of control" with the trade in stolen parts now worth £200m a year, the police and electronics manufacturers revealed yesterday.

Criminals are targeting manufacturers, wholesalers, and companies - including a break-in at Scotland Yard offices - to steal the chips which, because of a world shortage, are now more valuable by weight than gold.

Insurers estimate that the total cost of replacing the chips, carrying out repairs and replacing all the lost information stored in the stolen memory banks is more than £1bn a year.

The police and the private sector joined together yesterday in launching a new campaign to tackle the escalating problem.

Memory chips, also known as RAM (random access memory), are essential for computers to operate. They can be sold to small businesses looking for a cheap way to upgrade their systems, or to second-hand dealers. The police also have anecdotal evidence that some of the chips are being sold in the Far East and eastern Europe, where they are recycled and fitted into new models.

The computer thieves prise open the computers and remove the chips, which are stored on plastic boards or "SIMM boards". On a large model the chips cost about £700 and are worth about half that second-hand.

At present most manufacturers do not individually tag chips so they are virtually untraceable.

Inquiries made by the National Criminal Intelligence Service during the past year found that in some areas of Britain thefts of chips had shot up. In the

Midlands they have risen by 74 per cent on last year.

In just two operations earlier this year in London 70 people were arrested and £1.5m of stolen computer components were recovered.

In one recent incident criminals broke into the Metropolitan Police's property services division in Tintagel House, central London, where Scotland Yard's complaints bureau is based, and stole chips from computers. IBM, the computer manufacturer, had £1.5m worth of memory chips stolen in one raid last year at a supplier in the west of Scotland.

John Almonds, director of security at BT, which has suffered a series of break-ins, said the problem was first identified last summer and reached "epidemic proportions" at the beginning of this year. "This has continued unabated," he said.

Commander Tom Williamson, of the Metropolitan Police, said: "The chips are worth more, weight for weight, than industrial diamonds or gold. Criminals have realised that computer chips are easy to steal, have a value much higher than other stolen goods and cannot be easily traced. These three components make computer chip theft a very attractive proposition to criminals."

Among the crime initiatives being introduced and tested by manufacturers and the police are special computers that automatically shut down if the chips are tampered with along with better alarm systems, bar-coding or tagging each chip board, and spraying the computers with special water that has a unique coding that can be identified on criminals in a similar way to DNA. However, the police said that until computer users insisted on better security measures the manufacturers would continue largely to ignore the problem.

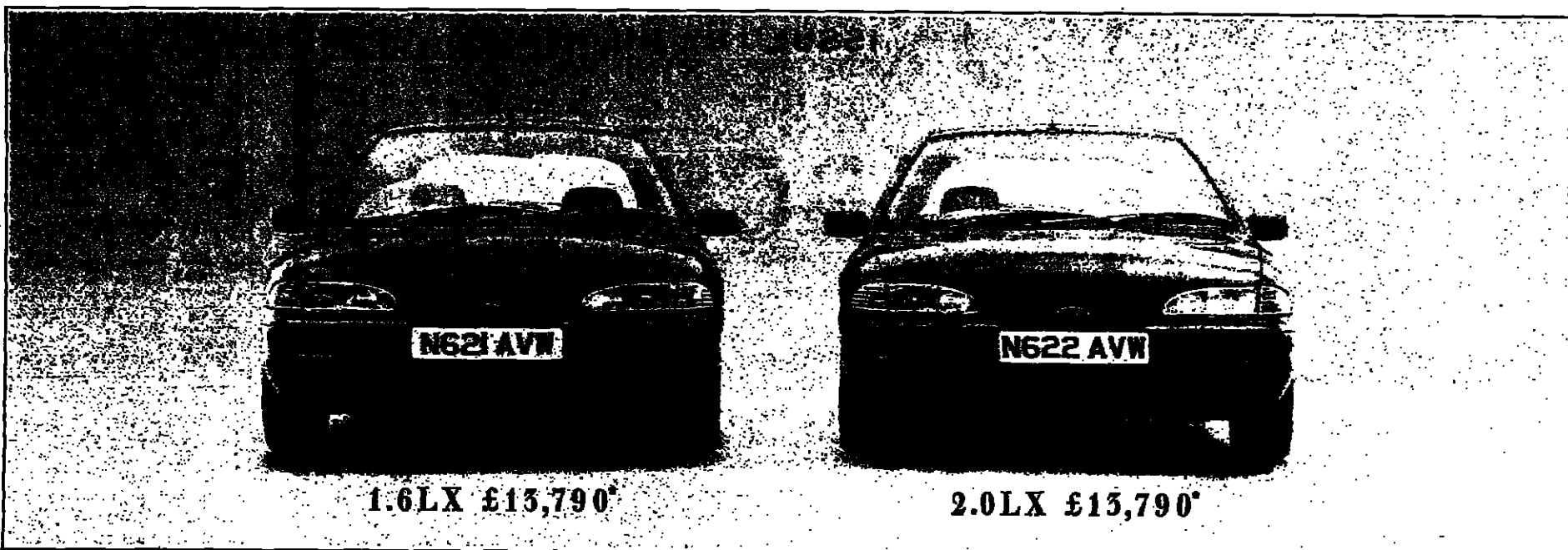


Natural talent of a Briton earns reward



This stunning picture of a blue iceberg in Antarctica, left, has clinched the British Gas Wildlife Photographer of the Year award for Cherry Alexander. Mrs Alexander, from Sturminster Newton, Dorset, is the first British woman to win the competition, which is organised by BBC Wildlife Magazine and the Natural History Museum. Mrs Alexander, pictured above, who collected the award yesterday, said: "Blue icebergs are thought to consist of ancient compressed ice that absorbs all the light except blue, and they are very rare."

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Angry skaters plan legal fight over park ban

JOHN MCKIE

Britain's main skating organisation is considering legal action against the ban on park skating - known more often as rollerblading - in all but two of London's royal parks.

The British Inline Skating Association (Bisa) is furious that the Royal Parks Agency has banned skating in four parks in London - Regent's Park, St James's Park, Green Park and Greenwich Park - and restricted its practice in the two remaining royal parks, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.

The Royal Parks Agency took action last Wednesday after a coroner's inquest into the accidental death of Mark Welch, a 26-year-old cyclist, who collided with a skater in June.

On 5 October the coroner, Dr Paul Knapman, criticised the Royal Parks' "spineless acquiescence to minority groups". By last weekend, notices were up on the four parks banning the sport. It has an estimated 500,000 devotees in Britain and is the fastest-growing sport in the UK.

Bisa's spokeswoman, Davina Weir-Willats, said yesterday: "We have been taking legal

advice. Lawyers have told us the RPA has to go to the Secretary of State and the ban isn't enforceable for six months. They can't enforce it and should they arrest someone there's no by-law for that person to be prosecuted. We are trying to get them to change their minds and accommodate rights for sensible skaters."

Bisa is angry that the RPA has rushed through the ban and gritted surfaces in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Skaters have been organising a petition of 1,000 signatures aiming to reverse the decision. The majority of signatures are from professionals over 40. They plan to continue skating but royal park authorities have warned that persistent offenders face arrest.

Tom Corby, a Royal Parks Agency spokesman, said it was acting within its legal rights. "Our role is to manage the parks for the benefit of all park users. We have not changed the regulations of the park [which would require permission from the Secretary of State]. We have just introduced new arrangements for rollerbladers. As I understand it, we have the power to do that."

DAILY POEM

Miss Zhou Drops a Bombshell

By Sarah Lawson

"You may not believe this," she says,
Challenging me to imagine -
Pausing to let me prepare myself -
"But
Not everyone
In China
Has
A television set."
The bathos leaves me speechless
But she reads it
As shock at deprivation.

Sarah Lawson was born in Indianapolis in 1943 and has lived in London since 1969. In 1991 she went to teach at Suzhou University in Jiangsu Province in China, from which a cycle of poems, *Down Where the Willow Is Washing Her Hair*, this poem among them, emerged. Her poetry has appeared in *Poetry Introduction 6* (Faber) and numerous magazines and anthologies. The collection is published by Hearing Eye (Box 1, 99 Torrington Avenue, London NW5 2RX) at £3.

Balkan turmoil: Croats pledge not to launch assault on East Slavonia after US warning □ New hope for besieged Muslim town

Tudjman reins in attack

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Croatia will not attack Eastern Slavonia, the last Serb-held area of the country, while peace talks are in progress, President Franjo Tudjman assured the US peace envoy Richard Holbrooke yesterday.

President Tudjman's assurance followed warnings from President Bill Clinton that any action by Zagreb to recapture Eastern Slavonia could derail US-brokered peace talks on Bosnia, due to take place at Wright-Patterson air base, Ohio, at the end of the month.

Recently, Mr Tudjman has made statements similar to those he made before the capture of Krajina, and there have been suggestions Croatia may try to retake the area before the UN mandate in Croatia expires on 30 November.

But Mr Holbrooke said he had seen no evidence Croatia was planning to attack Eastern Slavonia, following its victories in Krajina in August. "I am assured 90,000 Croatian troops have been demobilised and there's been some shuffling around of units," he said. "I do not view that as military activity directed at Eastern Slavonia."

Meanwhile, the mystery of the two French airmen shot down over Bosnia Serb territory on 30 August during Nato air strikes deepened after the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, said they had been abducted from hospital by "persons unknown", an allegation dismissed as "grotesque" by the French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette.

Photographs of the two airmen, who bailed out when their fighter-bomber was shot down near the Bosnia Serb headquarters, Pale, later appeared in *Paris-Match*. The French authorities said they were very

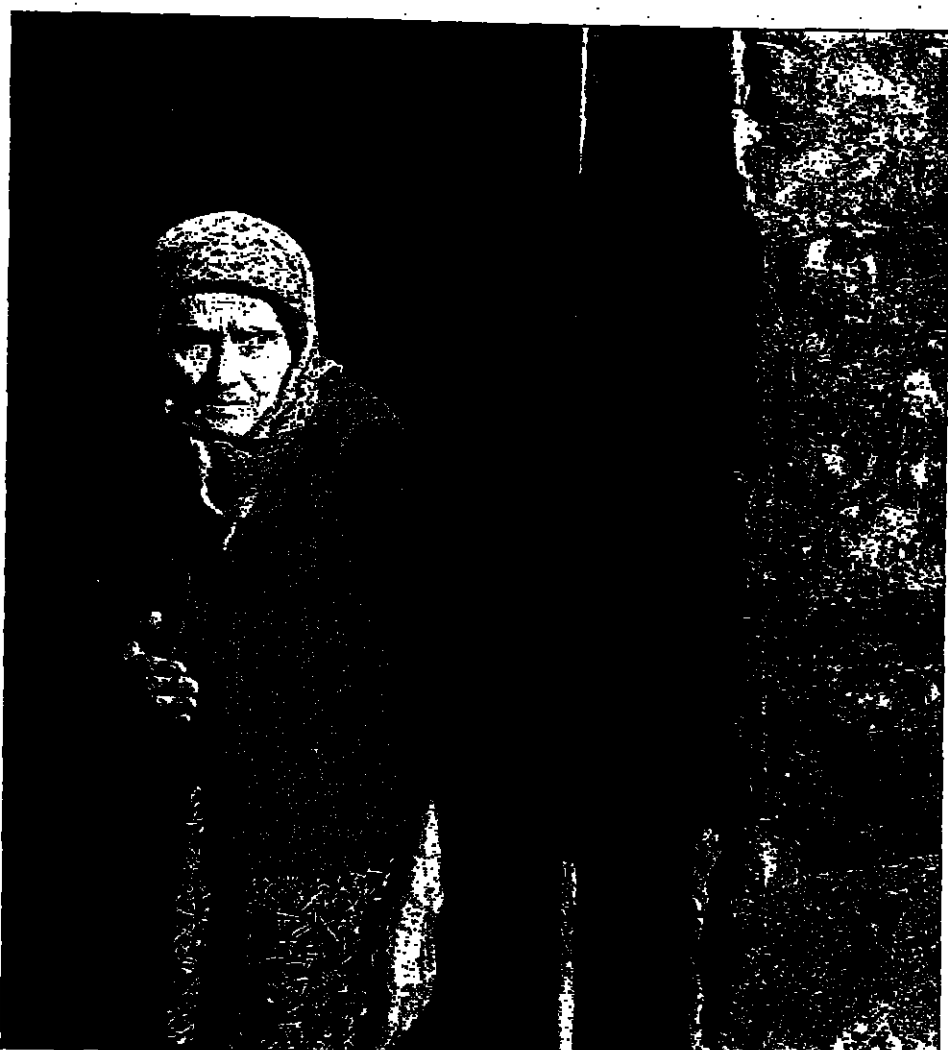
worried about the fate of the airmen and the prognosis was "not looking good".

Assuming Captain Frederic Chiffot and Lieutenant Jose Souvignat survived their capture — and the photographic evidence suggests they did — the Bosnian Serbs would have little to gain by killing them.

French sources fear they could be pawns in a power game between Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, and Mr Karadzic, who claimed the pilots might have been kidnapped by a rebel Serb group or by Muslims. "The longer time goes by the more worrying this

affair becomes," a French official said yesterday. "They could be dead and Karadzic could be belatedly trying to cover it up." In Sarajevo it was confirmed that two Bosnian Serb journalists detained by government forces last month are dead. The Bosnian Serb news agency reported on Wednesday that the two Serb journalists had been killed in prison.

Washington — President Clinton said that he was confident Congress would ultimately back his plan to send up to 20,000 US troops to help implement a peace agreement in Bosnia, *Reuters* reports.



Face of suffering: An old woman stands in a doorway in Gorazde. After four years under Serb siege, the inhabitants hope a route will be reopened to Sarajevo

Gorazde prays for a road to freedom

"Welcome to free Gorazde," the official said — although it's more a state of mind than a fair description of the last government-held enclave in eastern Bosnia — the kind of place to which Sarajevoans send food parcels, and where a good time means hanging out by the bridge in the watery autumn sunshine.

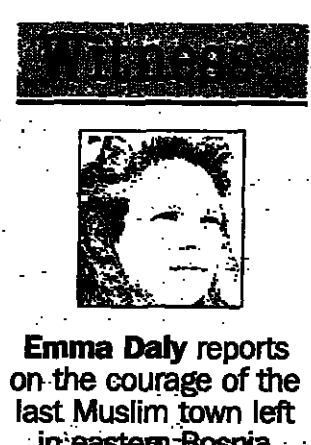
For the first time since the war closed in on Gorazde in the spring of 1992, a crack has opened in the Serb armour around the enclave, with the planned opening to civilian traffic of the main road to Sarajevo, 60 miles away.

Over the past few days peacekeepers and aid workers have made cautious forays past glowering Serb check-points; yesterday's convoy included the US ambassador to Bosnia, John Menzies.

Swarms of children tear across the fields at the edge of town, just beyond the last Serb barrier, calling for sweets and giggling at the spectacle. Their elders are less demanding but friendly, smiling until they weep for the past. Under the ceasefire brokered by the US envoy, Richard Holbrooke, the residents of Gorazde should be free to travel (under UN escort) to Sarajevo. No one we met is ready to risk that journey, but everyone hopes it will improve life in the enclave.

In the small covered market, prices are falling in anticipation of new goods, with traders trying to shift the second-hand boots and jeans, the half-empty bottle of shampoo, the 500g bag of salt that costs 30 German Marks, a third of the price a month ago. "Everything is cheaper because we hope everything will be better with this road," said one lean stallholder. "We hope there will be peace, so we can go to Sarajevo — for Gorazde that will be at least a half-price."

Most goods are home-grown: tobacco, apples, onions, leeks,



Emma Daly reports on the courage of the last Muslim town left in eastern Bosnia

potatoes and honey, from villages in the enclave. They supplement the meagre aid distributed by the UN despite constant Serb attempts to block convoys. That is why children scamper about in cut-off boots, and why residents have been unable to repair the war damage.

The Serbs banned shelter materials, shoes, clothing and candles from aid convoys. They also cut water, gas, electricity supplies and telephone lines. But everywhere there are signs of the resilience that kept the enclave alive during the worst days. Under the wide modern bridge that spans the river, hangs a plank bridge: pedestrians risk banging their heads on the metal struts of the main structure, but are shielded from snipers in the hills above.

The river below streams through improvised water wheels that generate the only electricity in the city. Each provides enough power to run a radio for a few hours and perhaps a light bulb. City sounds are much reduced: no cars, engines, music, culture, no entertainment, but what the locals provide: The young wander around (now that the cease-fire has rendered the streets safe), read books and have babies.

"We want to be part of the solution and we want to be part of civilisation," Rijad Rasic, the local leader, told Mr Menzies.

For a time it seemed that Gorazde's contribution to the peace plan would be to surrender, following a suggestion that the government trade it to the Serbs for territory elsewhere. But that plan appears to have been squashed — at least according to the people there — and with the opening of the road it would be hard for the government to give it away. "Do you know how many people have given their lives for this town, and how many more are ready to die?" Mr Rasic asked. "Is it possible? No."

Outside the battered hospital, where shells landed even as doctors struggled to tend the wounded and dying without equipment and medicine, a rocket that landed in the grounds has been left as a monument to the city's suffering.

"In the first five or six months of war people died because they had no food. Many people have lost between 20 and 30kg," Dr Hussein Praso said. "And there are many psychological problems. It was enough that people had to live underground in the dark, that for four years they have not seen their families. I have a son and wife in Sarajevo, but Sarajevo is now so far, as far away as Australia."

Many of the 57,000 who live in Gorazde are refugees. Most were forced to abandon their homes when the Serbs swept through Foca, Visegrad, Rogatica and Cajnice.

"This is the first cigarette I've had for four years," said Hasla Salaman, 85, gazing at the cardboard box of goodies sent by her son, who lives in Sarajevo. "Just tell them that I want to come to them," she said, a few tears quickly brushed away. "I had everything before the war, and it's hard, because here I have nothing."

Court orders EU to open up

SARAH HELM
Brussels

The campaign for more openness in European decision-making won a victory in the European Court of Justice yesterday when judges ruled that the *Guardian* newspaper was wrongly denied access to important minutes.

The *Guardian* had accused the Council of Ministers of abusing the EU's freedom-of-information policy by refusing to release documents which might reveal disagreements between member states.

John Carvel, a correspondent for the paper, complained he had applied for minutes of meetings of justice and farm ministers, but the Council had refused to hand them over.

Yesterday, the Luxembourg court ruled that the decision should be annulled. Freedom of information campaigners welcomed the judgment, saying it ought to put pressure on the Council of Ministers, the most powerful and secretive of the EU's institutions, to follow principles in force in most EU member states.

The ruling was welcomed in

the European Parliament, which accused the Council of taking decisions behind closed doors without allowing the parliament a chance to scrutinise the reasons. Pauline Green, leader of the Socialist group, said she would demand that the Council make a statement on the ruling before the European Parliament next week. "It's the only law-making body in the whole of the democratic world that is proceeding like that," Denmark and the Netherlands, which have criticised the secrecy of EU decision making, welcomed the ruling.

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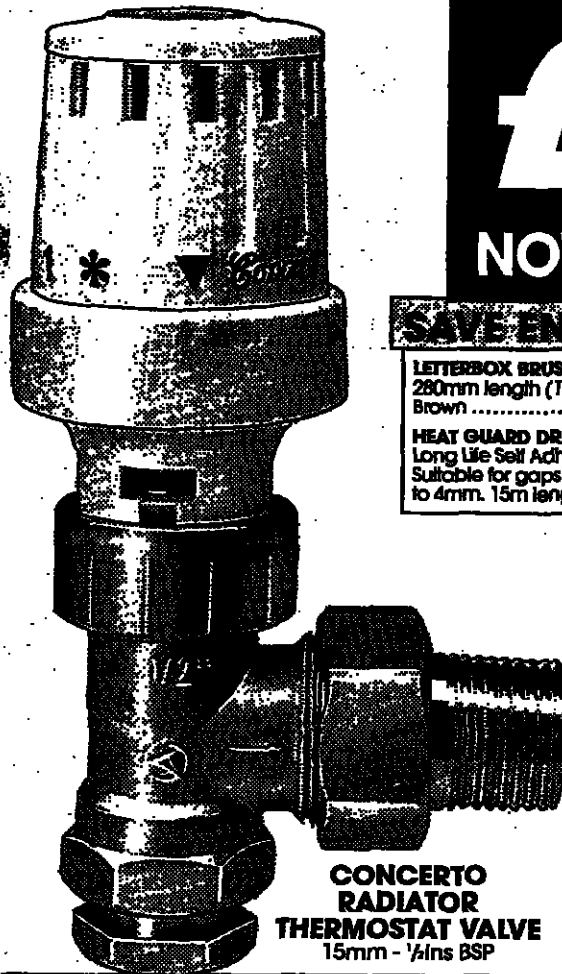
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international

Embattled Chirac calls off visit to US

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Reinforcing the impression of crisis and uncertainty at the top of the French administration, President Jacques Chirac has called off an official visit to the United States, planned for early November, citing "convenience and time". The visit is to be rescheduled for February.

The President's trip to the UN General Assembly in New York next week, including his controversial meeting with his Algerian counterpart, Liamine Zeroual, will go ahead. But the postponement of his first state visit to Washington sends disturbing signals. No national leader, even a determined Gaullist like Mr Chirac, cancels an engagement with the world's only superpower without some consideration of the diplomatic cost.

News of the postponement,

announced first in Washington but requested by Paris, came hours after an opinion poll had shown the ratings of the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, reaching a new low. In a telling detail, French commentators did not stress that Mr Juppé's popularity had fallen to 29 per cent, but said that it had almost reached the depths plumbed by Edith Cresson, the Socialist prime minister whose brief tenure at the Matignon made her a byword for political disaster. Mrs Cresson, now an EU Commissioner, had an approval rating of 28 per cent immediately before her dismissal.

Mr Chirac's poll rating stands at around 35 per cent. The decline in his popularity and that of the Prime Minister are without precedent for a new French administration. And while few now suggest that Mr Juppé's job is in danger, a legal fudge let him off the hook

over his subsidised Paris flat — the polls add another piece to a picture which looks ever more gloomy for the five-month-old Chirac/Juppé leadership.

Abroad, French diplomacy is suffering from the resumption of nuclear testing last month and will continue to suffer until the series has been completed. Mr Chirac's decision to meet the Algerian leader in New York, whether or not it provoked the latest Paris bomb attack, has caused controversy in France and Algeria. In the words of one French commentator: "Politics is a matter of symbols; Mr Chirac has been unfortunate in the case of nuclear policy; clumsy in the case of Algeria."

At home, each successive political ruction causes the value of the franc to judder. There is undisguised scorn for Mr Juppé's escape from legal investigation and despair over

the authorities' failure to halt the bombings. The Interior Minister, Jean-Louis Debré, has come in for special flak from the public, the police and, behind the scenes, from the judiciary, for ineffectiveness, naivety and indiscretion. Even the wisdom of imposing the national-security alert, which has put troops on the streets, is being questioned.

If this were not enough, the government has in the last two days faced stiff opposition from a usually supine National Assembly to its budget proposals — opposition which has come more from within the Gaullist-led coalition than from the left-wing opposition. By yesterday evening, MPs had forced an extra 4bn francs (£500m) in public-spending cuts, restored some of the tax advantages of life-insurance policies and caused a rethink on housing and old-age benefit payments.



Out of this world: Workers label food for astronauts in Moscow yesterday at Russia's only space-food plant, as it struggles to survive a cashflow crisis which threatens closure within a year. Photograph: Alexander Natunsk/Reuters

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Italy in crisis as minister refuses to quit

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

Italy's Justice Minister, Filippo Mancuso, whose attacks on anti-corruption magistrates have alienated public opinion, brought the temperature of political debate to boiling point yesterday when he refused to resign, despite losing a confidence vote in the Senate.

The 74-year-old career jurist caused turmoil in the upper house by inveighing against President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and the Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, accusing them of conspiring to protect the magistrates at all costs.

His speech split the political spectrum in two, with the conservative coalition of the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, cheering him on and the centre-left outraged about what they saw as smears.

The vote against Mr Mancuso was carried by 173 votes to three, but left the country in an impasse, as the constitution makes it virtually impossible to remove ministers. Either the government must now resign or President Scalfaro will have to remove Mr Mancuso from office. Either course could precipitate early elections.

The Mancuso affair has forced Italians to decide whether the anti-corruption drive that toppled the old political order in Italy was an attempt to clean up public life, or a kind of coup, which flouted every rule in the judicial rule-book, to serve specific political interests.

The debate has been sharpened by Mr Berlusconi's own experience. Accused of bribing tax inspectors investigating his Fininvest business empire, he has been ordered to stand trial next January — a trial he describes as a witch-hunt to prevent him from returning to

the prime minister's office he occupied last year.

Mr Mancuso has his own reasons for despising the judiciary. He believes the "Clean Hands" anti-corruption team in Milan have extracted confessions under duress and have leaked key documents to the press, abusing the confidentiality of their office.

Yesterday he claimed President Scalfaro had pressured him into halting inspections into the work of the Milan magistrates. Mr Mancuso also accused Mr Dini of bad faith by first going along with his policies and then withdrawing support. Mr Dini did not attend the confidence debate, but said he would not respond to such "provocations".

He accused Mr Mancuso of failing to respect the collegiality of the government. Mr Mancuso's main failing is his approach. Instead of trying to reform the system, he has tried to punish individual magistrates — unsuccessfully, as his inspection teams keep absolving them of wrongdoing. And, instead of working with the government, he has denounced Mr Dini as "servile". Now he has been discredited but he still refuses to resign. He has become a one-man embarrassment to Italian democracy, eloquent proof that the system still needs reform.



Mancuso: Despises judiciary

Robbers lose acquired immunity to justice

Rome — Italy's constitutional court has put an end to the antics of a band of Turin robbers who for the past few months have held up dozens of banks and got away with it because they have Aids, and are therefore immune to prosecution, writes Andrew Gumbel.

The court cancelled a special decree passed three years ago which ruled that terminally ill criminals could not be kept in jail. Judges will now have to use discretion to decide whether or not to prosecute Aids patients for their misdeeds.

The 1992 decree was supposed to be a humanitarian gesture, but ended up exposing the whole Italian legal system to ridicule when the Turin gang — all heroin addicts infected by shared needles — earned notoriety over the summer.

They would repeatedly enter small banks in the Turin area, threaten staff and customers with a knife and walk out moments later with their pockets and coats stuffed with cash. The police got so used to catching them and then releasing them again that they ended up on first-name terms.

One of the gang leaders is now in hospital recovering from a lung infection, while the other two are living at home. They say their robberies were partly intended as a protest against the lack of facilities for people in

their position. Italy offers almost no specialised medical care for Aids patients.

Italy's asylums and mental hospitals were closed down in one fell swoop in the late 1970s in a rushed attempt to end the inhumane conditions there, and nothing has taken their place. Social workers and magistrates agree that jail is not a satisfactory alternative, since conditions are often crude and unsanitary.

They have called for a rapid infusion of state cash to provide hospices for Aids sufferers.

The constitutional court ruling was quickly denounced by the bandits, who said that they would have no chance of receiving appropriate treatment if they were sent to jail. "You'll see, plenty of people in my condition will commit suicide rather than go back to prison," said Sergio Magnis, 29, from his hospital bed.

"How can they think of putting someone like me in a cell with other prisoners? Here everyone wears gloves and a face mask. Will they give the same things to the other inmates, or will they let them get infected and die?"

The president of the constitutional court, Vincenzo Ciarra, acknowledged that the problem of inadequate treatment remained, but insisted it was a matter for the prison administration.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

Yeltsin to throw Kozyrev to the nationalist wolves

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin sought to shore up his struggling presidency yesterday by revealing that he plans to sack Andrei Kozyrev, his Foreign Minister and one of his most loyal allies, as soon as he can find a replacement.

It was the latest of several attacks on his increasingly powerless minister in an attempt to appease Russia's nationalists and other hardliners who accuse Mr Kozyrev of selling out to the West, particularly over Bosnia, and have long demanded his resignation.

With the Communists threatening to sweep parliamentary elections in December, and a presidential race in June, Mr Yeltsin's actions were clearly intended to try to improve his own dimly low popularity ratings by decrying a figure who is widely scorned at home.

As political savagings go, it was nasty, making it hard to believe that Mr Kozyrev can last much longer. According to Mr Yeltsin, the Foreign Minister could not get on with other ministers, and had failed to co-ordinate his policy with the government.

The only reason he had not replaced him was because he had not found someone else to do the job. "Let him continue working," the President said. "Let us not make him knuckle under. But my decision will stay." Today the two men are due to visit Paris, where they will meet President Jacques Chirac.

If and when it happens, Mr Kozyrev's departure will cause some concern in the West, although little surprise. His demise has been predicted in Moscow almost weekly ever since he got the job in 1990. But it is questionable how much difference it will make to Russian foreign policy, if any, no matter who replaces him.

The liberally inclined Mr Kozyrev has been derided as the West's "Mr Yes" — as opposed to the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, the "Mr No" of the Cold War. But recently

he has sounded less pro-Western and increasingly nationalist. The major points of disagreement with the West — Nato enlargement, the bombing of the Serbs, and the inclusion of Russian troops in a peace-keeping force in Bosnia — seem likely to drag on, not least because Mr Yeltsin himself has been dictating foreign policy of late. Moreover, the West has shown little willingness to compromise, no matter how loudly Russia protests.

Mr Yeltsin seemed to signal that in broad terms Russia would maintain its relationship with the West. He also made a frank admission that the war in Chechnya had been a mistake, a point that Western governments have been making since the conflict began 10 months ago. "So many people have been killed there," he said. "This is the biggest disappointment of my entire presidency."

He talked hopefully about reaching an agreement with President Bill Clinton during his forthcoming trip to the United States over the possible deployment of nuclear weapons near the Russian border if Nato expands into Eastern Europe. He was determined to keep the US-Russian relationship on track, he said. President Clinton "got on too well" to let it deteriorate, he said.

The scent of ministerial blood yesterday set off speculation over who might succeed Mr Kozyrev. Among the names mooted was Vladimir Lukin, head of the State Duma's (lower house) foreign affairs committee, who has criticised Mr Kozyrev for incompetence. A more probable candidate is Anatoly Adamishin, Russia's ambassador to London.

Mr Adamishin was summoned recently to discuss the Balkan conflict with Mr Yeltsin while the President was on holiday on the Black Sea, giving rise to suggestions that he might be destined for higher office (and supplying more evidence that Mr Kozyrev was doomed). Earlier this month he wrote an article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

saying that co-operation with the West should not mean Russia's national interests are overlooked — a veiled attack on Mr Kozyrev and an attempt to curry favour with the nationalists. Another possibility is Yury Vorontov, the Russian ambassador to the US. Like Mr Adamishin, he is a career diplomat in his sixties with a long record in the Soviet Foreign Ministry — characteristics that may appeal to the popular hankering for the return of Soviet-style heavyweights.

"Such people would be treated with more respect by the critics of Kozyrev, as they are older and more solid-looking figures," said one Western diplomatic source. Whether any reshuffle will ultimately help Mr Yeltsin to revive his fortunes is disputable.



Facing the sack: Mr Kozyrev, the Foreign Minister, making a point to Russian MPs

Photograph: Alexander Natursky/Reuters

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IN BRIEF

Palestinian exiles may find refuge in Syria

Nicosia — Most of the 650 Palestinians stranded aboard the ferry *Courtesy M* in the Mediterranean after Libya deported them should be on their way to Syria soon, the Cypriot government said yesterday. But the Interior Minister, Dinos Michaelides, stressed Cyprus would not take in the remaining passengers, who do not have Syrian documents. Libya ordered 30,000 Palestinians to leave in August to stress Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's opposition to accords between Israel and the Palestinians. AP

Muslim group 'behind unrest in Libya'

Cairo — A previously unknown Muslim group has claimed responsibility for unrest in Libya earlier this year and said it was moving toward to topple Colonel Muammar Gaddafi into the open. The Fighting Islamic Group in Libya said it was the duty of all Libyan Muslims to topple Gaddafi and impose Islamic law. Reuters

Maoris win biggest compensation deal

Wellington — Parliament has approved the biggest compensation deal yet with indigenous tribes who lost vast tracts of territory to British colonisers in 1863. Only a fraction of the land will be handed back to Maoris in the Waikato region on the North Island but the government will apologise for the seizure. AP



Failed suicide

New York — The actress Mary Tyler Moore (left) says in her new autobiography that she tried to help her cancer-stricken brother commit suicide by feeding him icecream laced with pain-killing drugs. But she says in the book, *After All*, that her brother, John Moore, 47, lived three more months before dying in his sleep. He had stashed hundreds of pills in his home. Reuters

Mexicans jailed for assassination plot

Mexico City — A judge sentenced three people to up to 18 years for their role in last year's assassination of Francisco Ruiz Massieu, secretary-general of Mexico's governing Institutional Revolutionary Party. Irwin Anthony Dorrego and Jose Ramirez Arauz were each sentenced to 18 years for the premeditated murder, while Maria Eugenia Ramirez Arauz was sentenced to four years and six months on firearms charges. Reuters

Macedonian president leaves hospital

Skopje — President Kiro Gligorov of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been released from hospital, where he was treated for severe injuries after a car bombing on 3 October. He lost his right eye in the attack. No progress has been reported in the investigation of the car-bombing. AP

Zambia halts investigation into Kaunda

Lusaka — The Zambian government has dropped its investigation into whether the former president, Kenneth Kaunda, ruled the country illegally as a Malawian for six years. State radio quoted the Home Affairs Minister, Chitatu Sampa, as saying he had told police to halt their investigation. Reuters

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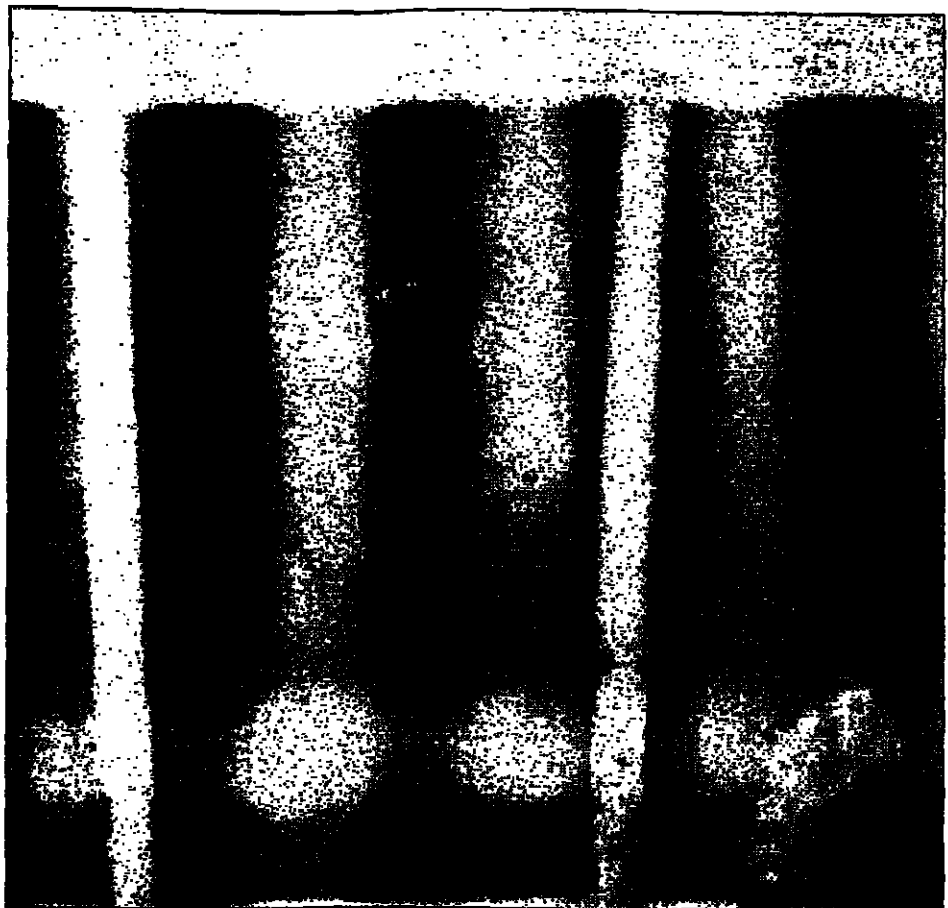
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international



Behind bars: A prisoner serving a life sentence looks out from his cell in the former death row of Pretoria's maximum-security prison. Since the abolition of capital punishment the block has housed violent criminals. Photograph: John Moore/AP

SA serial killer suspect caught

MICHAEL RODDY
Reuters

Pretoria — South African police yesterday shot and arrested Moses Sithole, 31, the man they had named as the prime suspect in the serial killings of at least 40 women, some of whom were lured to their deaths by letters and telephone calls.

According to police, Mr Sithole may have used his previous job as a youth counsellor to ensnare women before raping and strangling them with their underwear. He was cornered in a slum district of Johannesburg on Wednesday night after detectives received a tip-off that he was going to see a relative.

When he was confronted, police said, he attacked two undercover investigators with an axe. They fired two warning shots and then shot him first in the foot and in the stomach when he did not stop. The police commissioner, George Fivaz, said Mr Sithole was in satisfactory condition in hospital.

"This was a person who has been sought for many weeks for the killings of many persons and up to now we can't determine how he may react," Mr Fivaz added, defending the police,

who were criticised for having shot dead a previous suspect, David Selepe. Last week they named Mr Sithole, believed also to be an ex-convict, as their prime suspect. They published his picture, a list of his six known aliases and appealed to people not to exact mob justice if he was found.

The serial killings are part of a crime wave rocking South Africa. The bodies of the black women victims were found near railway stations, in open fields and in mine dumps.

The commissioner did not rule out links between Mr Sithole and the previous suspect, Selepe. "All indications are that he worked as a loner over the last couple of months... [but] there are indications that he could be linked with David Selepe," Mr Fivaz said.

Mr Sithole may have been the man who called two Johannesburg newspapers claiming to be the serial killer. In one of the calls the man claimed to have killed up to 76 people.

Mr Fivaz said precautions would be taken to ensure the prisoner's safety and he would stand trial as soon as possible. President Nelson Mandela had congratulated the detective team for their work, he said.

Syria's ally stays on in Beirut

ROBERT FISK
Beirut

"For the benefit of a third party," as Beirut's *L'Orient Le Jour* discreetly reported, Lebanon's 128-member parliament voted yesterday to tinker with the country's constitution and give President Elias Hrawi another three years in office.

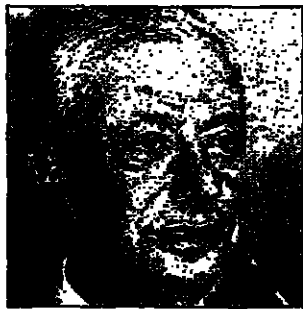
The "third party", of course, was Syria, for whom Mr Hrawi — whose supposedly unextendable six-year term of office should be drawing to a close — has been a loyal, indeed a dutiful ally. And no fewer than 110 legislators voted to amend the Article 49 of the constitution once they learned that President Assad of Syria wanted his faithful associate to remain. So at least we now know who runs Lebanon.

In the French mandate parliament building on the old front line, the men who say they believe in Lebanese democracy — all but a few — voted to give Mr Hrawi a one-off extension to his presidency in order that he could continue Middle East peace negotiations and the direction of Lebanon's post-civil war recovery. It was, to put it mildly, a foregone conclusion.

Keeping Mr Hrawi in the presidential palace at Baabda means that the billionaire Rafiq Hariri will remain as prime minister to oversee the \$18bn (£11bn) reconstruction programme and maintain the value of the hard-pressed Lebanese pound. Mr Hariri was the first to congratulate Mr Hrawi on his extraordinary good fortune.

But there were, as they say, dissenting voices. The elderly and unwell former prime minister, Selim el-Hoss, grimly reminded parliamentarians that they had been able to elect presidents five times during the "darkest circumstances" of the 1975-90 civil war — without changing the constitution.

Nassib Lahoud, a former Lebanese ambassador to Washington, who has presidential aspirations, described Mr Hrawi's three-year extension as "a blow to... democracy". Mikhail



Elias Hrawi: Term extended

Daher, who wished to become president in 1989, demanded a legal challenge to "the violation of the constitution", but was overruled by the Speaker.

In an age when an Arab leader can claim more than 99 per cent of the vote — Saddam Hussein springs effortlessly to mind — Mr Hrawi's extension appears as a mere trifling with the principles of democracy. But Article 49 was drawn up to prevent the manipulation of the presidency, and if it can be altered for one more three-year term for Mr Hrawi, why can it not be similarly amended in three years' time?

The article has been tampered with before — three times since 1977 — but throughout the civil war Lebanese politicians adhered to the rules — in spirit at least. It was this belief in the legal system that enabled the country to reconstitute itself once General Michel Aoun's rebel government had been crushed by Syrian firepower in 1990.

The exiled general's supporters planned a demonstration against the amendment yesterday, but the government banned their protest.

To search for the source of true power here, one has only to count the 30,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, and the portraits of President Assad on walls and offices. Sister Lebanon and Sister Syria — as they call themselves in official speeches — are locked together in the sisterly embrace of a co-operation and friendship treaty that makes constitutional amendments a mere formality.

Clinton holds budget aces

The President may turn the tables on his foes as the day of reckoning looms, writes **Rupert Cornwell**

Washington — President Bill Clinton yesterday vowed he would veto Congressional tax and health-care reform plans, presenting himself as the last line of defence against an extremist Republican party. It is a strategy which has already given him the initiative in the looming showdown with Congress over the federal budget, and could become a winning formula for his 1996 re-election campaign.

Technically, the moment of budgetary reckoning is still three weeks off. But after a brief flirtation with compromise, the Democratic White House and the Republican majority on Capitol Hill are back on collision course, playing a game of financial chicken which, if neither side yields, could shut down the government and even lead the US into a debt default.

The battle is unfolding on two fronts: the clutch of spending bills for the year 1995-96 which began on 1 October, and a mammoth overall "reconciliation" bill laying out the detailed tax and spending cuts to meet the Republicans' goal of bal-

ancing the budget by 2002. All must be on Mr Clinton's desk by 13 November, when the current stop-gap bill authorising government spending expires.

But internal Republican disputes, the leisurely procedures of the Senate and the sheer number of bills to be passed make it unlikely that deadline any longer can be met. Increasingly the Republicans are bogged down in legislative detail, and yesterday Mr Clinton said only three of the 13 spending bills had been finished.

But the real budget wars are over taxes and Medicare, the federal health-care scheme for the elderly, which the Republicans want to cut back by \$270bn (£168bn) over the next seven years. The plan was expected to be approved by the House last night, but its fate in the Senate is unclear. The same goes for the \$245bn (£150bn) tax-cut package, which Mr Clinton says conceals a \$43bn

(£27bn) tax increase for poorer Americans.

A year ago Mr Clinton met crushing defeat over his health care reform plan, as Republicans scared voters into believing a bureaucratic government takeover of the country's health system was at hand. This time, roles are exactly reversed.

By taking the axe to Medicare and Medicaid, the separate government scheme for the poor, it is the Republicans who are the reformers — accused by Mr Clinton of mounting a callous and ideologically driven attack on the US social safety net, all in the name of unneeded tax cuts for the rich. "There's a right way to balance the budget and a wrong way. This is the wrong one," Mr Clinton declared.

And scaremongering is working again. Any honeymoon of ordinary voters with the Republicans after the party's historic sweep of Congress last year

is long over, with 55 per cent of respondents in a recent survey saying that the more they heard what Congress was up to, the less they liked it. Asked to choose between tax cuts and "saving Medicare", voters by far prefer the latter.

By contrast Mr Clinton, preacher of change in 1992 but now champion of the status quo, is enjoying his highest approval ratings in months, and in a presidential match-up easily beats the Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, the current leading Republican candidate.

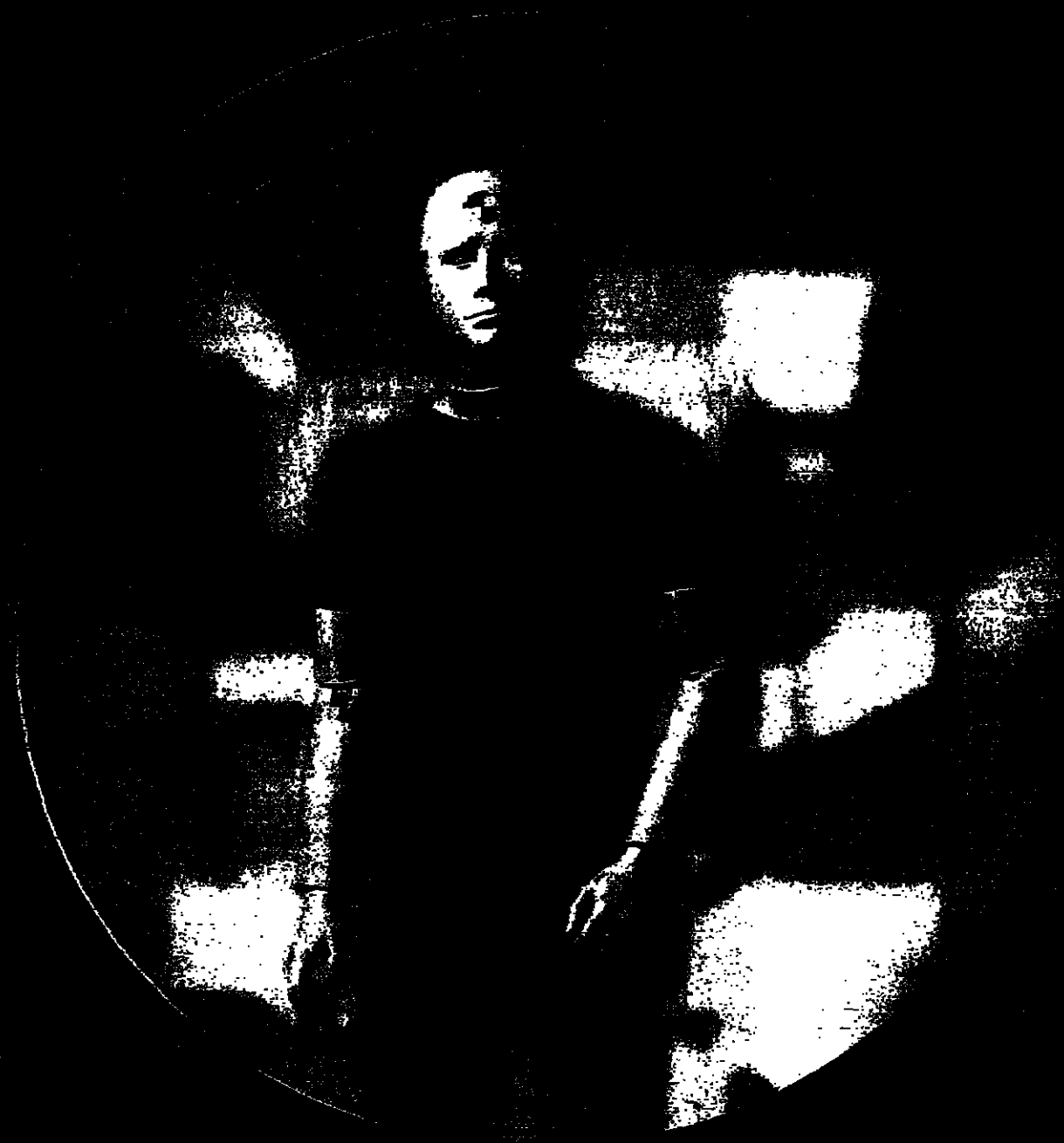
So far the Republican leadership betrays few signs of nervousness. Dismissing Mr Clinton's protestations as "a joke", and insisting that no President would dare veto a balanced budget, Speaker Newt Gingrich says he will deliver the bills at the appointed hour.

Mr Gingrich also seems determined to make congressional approval needed for an in-

crease in the US government's \$4,900bn (£3,060bn) debt ceiling conditional on Mr Clinton's acceptance of the reconciliation bill in its entirety. This week the Treasury announced it was scaling back some future borrowings, but the ceiling will still be hit in mid-November. At that point, if impasse continues, the US will default on some bond redemptions, possibly throwing financial markets into turmoil.

But as endgame approaches, Mr Clinton holds the better cards. For one thing Republicans are divided, not least Messrs Gingrich and Dole themselves. Faced with a Clinton veto, the instinct of Republican moderates like Mr Dole would be to cut a deal.

Mr Gingrich, though, is increasingly prisoner of the radical young Republicans who entered Congress last year. He is also learning the lesson of any would-be budget balancer. As the Republican landslide last year showed, everyone wants to get rid of the deficit. As the waning popularity of the Republican Congress now proves, no one wants to pay for it.



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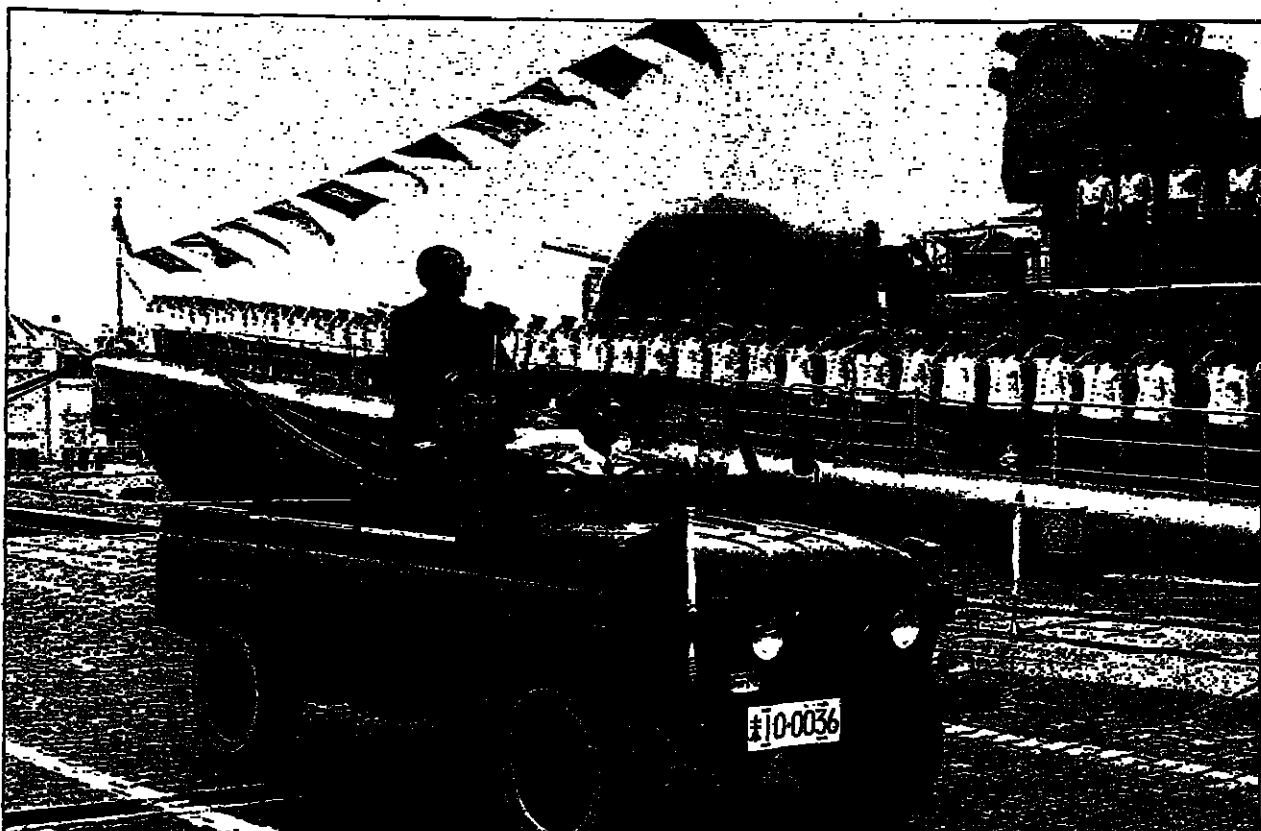
Chinese challenge: Naval exercises send tough message to US and Taiwan □ Pro-Peking body attacks Hong Kong's rights bill

Patten defends rights bill

Hong Kong (AP) — The Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, yesterday urged the people of the colony to speak out against the pro-China camp's proposal to water down freedoms enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights.

The recommendation by the legal panel of the Preliminary Working Committee, a body appointed by China to oversee the 1997 handover, shocked Hong Kong. Mr Patten warned that any move to tamper with the Bill of Rights would do "immeasurable damage". He added: "I just hope that everybody... who believes in that fundamental importance of the rule of law will stand up for it."

The legal panel said the 1991 Bill of Rights could not override the Basic Law, the constitution. China has written for post-1997 Hong Kong, and that amendments bringing laws into line with the Bill of Rights should be repealed.



Show of force: A photo of Mr Jiang reviewing naval units, which was published in Chinese papers Photograph: AP

Jiang bolsters his claim with show of military might

TERESA POOLE
Peking

When China's television broadcasts footage of President Jiang Zemin, surrounded by the new military leadership and watching naval exercises that included amphibious landings, the intended propaganda message is not subtle.

Wednesday night's pictures of Mr Jiang, seated with his commanders on the deck of a cruiser, was designed to portray a leader who can count on the military's loyalty. The footage of warships, beach landings and torpedo firings was another reminder for Taiwan of the possible consequences of moves

towards independence. And when the Chinese media highlights Mr Jiang and his recent naval manoeuvres only days before China's President is due to meet President Bill Clinton in New York, these are signals for the United States.

Firstly, Mr Jiang wants recognition as a powerful world leader (and is snatching over the US's denial of full state honours for his visit). Secondly, Washington should mind its own business over Taiwan, which is a "key issue" in Sino-US ties, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday. The relationship between Mr Jiang, the People's Liberation Army and China's policy over Taiwan, provides the Chinese backdrop to next Tuesday's presidential summit.

With the ailing 91-year-old Deng Xiaoping still clinging to life, Mr Jiang is using the time to bolster good relations with the generals, an essential consideration for anyone wanting to remain president, party chief and head of the armed forces.

Last month's personnel changes, including the promotion of General Zhang Wannian and the Defence Minister, Chi Haotian, to vice-chairmen of the Central Military Commission, of which Mr Jiang is chairman, were seen as strengthening the President.

There is also the matter of appearances. The photograph (shown left) that appeared yesterday on the front pages of Chinese newspapers echoed almost identical images of Chairman Mao and Mr Deng inspecting the troops.

Nor was it an accident that Mr Jiang visited the navy for his high-profile military jaunt. Sea power is becoming increasingly important, because of Taiwan

and China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. "The current situation has placed new demands on building the navy," Mr Jiang was quoted as saying.

The Taiwan challenge is one Mr Jiang cannot afford to mis-handle. In January, he staked his claim as the architect of China's Taiwan policy with an "Eight-Point Plan" for reunification. The received wisdom among Sinologists was that after the visit to the US in June by Taiwan's President, Lee Teng-hui, the generals attacked the Jiang approach as too soft, and instigated a more aggressive policy.

Manoeuvres followed, including missile tests just north of Taiwan. Virulent attacks on Mr Lee appeared in the Chinese media. More manoeuvres are believed to be planned for this year, to erode Taiwanese support for Mr Lee ahead of next year's elections.

It seemed like a confusing change of tack when a US news magazine, after an interview with Mr Jiang, reported this week that he had raised the possibility of talks with the Taiwanese President. But yesterday the Foreign Ministry "clarified" the situation. Mr Jiang's comments had been distorted, a spokesman said. The President had reiterated existing policy, which welcomes a meeting on condition it takes place under the principle of "One China". Peking regards Mr Lee as no more than the leader of a rebellious province.

The statement sounded like the military making sure no one misunderstood the real position. In any case, Taiwan's conditions for a meeting — that Peking recognises Taiwan as an equal political entity — make such talks unlikely.

NY extends its chilly welcome to Fidel Castro

PEOPLE

Fidel Castro will be making his third visit to the United Nations as Cuba's leader this weekend, now that his US visa has been approved. But will he have a good time in New York, the city where he honeymooned in 1948? Not if Mayor Rudolph Giuliani can help it. "I wouldn't invite him anywhere," the Mayor said. "What Fidel Castro has done to the Cuban people, including friends of mine, is an outrage of this century."

Mr Castro is to address the General Assembly on Sunday, but will be barred from a gala dinner Mr Giuliani will host, as well as a lunch at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a concert.

When he visited the UN in 1960, shortly after taking power in Havana, Mr Castro turned his back on the glitter and high prices on midtown Manhattan. After considering sleeping in a hammock in Central Park, he checked into the rundown Hotel Theresa in Harlem, when Nikita Khrushchev stopped by to see him. Barred from President Dwight Eisenhower's lunch for Latin American leaders, Mr Castro hosted his own get-together in the Theresa's coffee shop — for a dozen black hotel employees.

Argentina is crying again for Eva Peron, this time over the casting of Madonna in the title role of *Evita*, the film version of the musical long banned in Argentina. To President Carlos Menem, it is "a total and utter disgrace". Archbishop Antonio Quarracino of Buenos Aires sees it as "pornographic and blasphemous — an insult to Argentine women."

Mr Menem, a Peronist, is backing a local film, *Evita: The True Story*, which begins production in March. Starring Andrea del Boca, a soap-opera star, it will be "a film about the real Evita, not like one of those fakes people who know nothing about her life have been making", he proclaimed.

The Hollywood version, directed by Alan Parker, begins production in January in Budapest. While the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical portrayed Evita as a corrupt populist who slept her way to power, the Argentine film will paint her as a champion of the masses, the saint she is to many of her compatriots.

"Evita was a pioneering feminist, not the prostitute others would have you believe."

protested Victor Bo, the Argentine film's producer. Mr Lloyd Webber found her "easily the most unpleasant character I've written about".

On his recent US lecture tour, Mikhail Gorbachev wasn't sleepless in Seattle but trouserless in Louisville. After getting caught in the rain, Mr Gorbachev sent his trousers out to be pressed while he waited in a hotel bathrobe. When the trousers didn't reappear, and his speech was due to begin, the Secret Service was pressed into service to investi-



Eva Peron: A tearful issue

gata. At one point, a nervous Mr Gorbachev asked his interpreter if he could borrow his trousers. "Why wear any?" he replied. "This is America."

After another 30 minutes, the trousers were back and Mr Gorbachev emerged triumphant. After the lecture, the peckish ex-Soviet leader wanted some Kentucky Fried Chicken. The policeman who fetched a bucket of Original Recipe for six declined reimbursement. "This way, I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I bought dinner for Gorbachev," he said.

Who knows what he would have thought of *Pocahontas*, but Benito Mussolini was mad about Mickey Mouse, reports his son Romano. Mr Mussolini said his father sang Disney songs and thought *Snow White* and *the Seven Dwarfs* was such a masterpiece that he wanted to see it again and again. The dictator met Walt Disney in 1935, his son said: "He took him to Villa Torlonia [his residence] and they talked about Mickey Mouse, Minnie and Donald Duck."

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THE OMEGA FROM VAUXHALL



obituaries / gazette

Bill MacKenzie

In gardens all over Britain now the last stray blooms of a yellow clematis are sprawling between the powder puffs of its silky seedheads. The flower is stiff, like lemon peel, and its four petals curve in a gentle bell round prominent reddish-purple stamens. It is named after Bill MacKenzie who spent a long lifetime in gardening, first in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and then as curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, in west London.

MacKenzie first noticed this clematis, a much stronger, larger and more vigorous type than the ordinary species, in 1968 while he was visiting the Waterperry School of Horticulture, near Oxford. Another eminent gardener, Valerie Finnis, named it after him since it was his observant eye that had first spotted it. On 7 September 1976, she showed the clematis at a Royal Horticultural Society Show where it immediately won an Award of Merit.

MacKenzie, who lived the last 22 years of his life in Frimley Green, Surrey, was born in Scotland, where his father was head gardener at Ballinmore, near Loch Fyne in Argyllshire, an estate belonging to Col John MacRae Gilstrap. In his day, he used to explain, "boys either went into farming or gardening", and before he had finished school, he went to live with his grandfather who was a dairy farmer. "There was little other choice," he told Valerie Finnis, who recorded a conversation with him earlier this year. "But I had three cows to milk at five in the morning before school and another three to do each evening when I came home."

That was enough to put him off farming for life. Instead, he moved back to Ballinmore where he was taken on as vegetable boy, responsible for delivering supplies from the vast kitchen

garden to the Ballinmore cook. He evidently found favour there, for the family suggested he abandon gardening to train instead as their butler.

But gardening had him firmly in its grasp, and when he was 24, he became a student at the Edinburgh Botanic Garden. The Twenties and Thirties were heady times to be gardening there, for George Forrest was bringing back seed of new rhododendrons and primulas from his journeys in Yunnan, in China; Frank Kingdon Ward was sending seed of meconopsis, gentians and lilies from his plant-hunting trips in China, Burma and Tibet. It was MacKenzie's job, as deputy foreman in the propagation department, to raise all these new plants from the plant hunters' seed. Nomocharis from China, omphalogramma from Sikkim and Upper Burma, and many other plants (including the first plants ever seen at the botanic garden of the famous blue Himalayan poppy, *Meconopsis betulaefolia*) were coaxed into flower by MacKenzie's patient care. Like all the best gardeners, he was an acutely observant man.

While at the botanic garden MacKenzie developed a great love of alpine plants, particularly gentians, and bred the beautiful autumn gentian "Inverleith", which is an intense Cambridge blue, striped on the outside with darker blue. In 1953, he co-founded the Scottish Rock Garden Club which flourishes still. Last year the club presented with him with a silver salver to mark the occasion of his becoming their honorary life president.

After nearly 20 years at Edinburgh, MacKenzie accepted the prestigious post of curator at the Chelsea Physic Garden, at that stage rather a mysterious place, not open to the general public, but shut away



A great plantsman: MacKenzie in his garden at Frimley Green, Surrey. Photograph: Charles Hopkinson

behind high walls in the Royal Hospital Road, by the River Thames. He stayed there until he was nearly 70, his retirement coinciding with the tercentenary of the garden in 1973.

Just after the Second World War, when MacKenzie first came to London, the chairman of the committee who ran the garden for the Society of Apothecaries was the great plantsman E.A. Bowles, who gardened at Middleton House, in Enfield. "Bowles was a very wise judge of character," says the distinguished botanist and taxonomist William Stearn, who re-

members MacKenzie's arrival at the Physic Garden. "MacKenzie was a first-class curator, very well trained. His sheer competence in all departments of gardening is what I remember best about him. And he was such an agreeable, genial person."

When MacKenzie came to the Physic Garden, it was suffering very much from the neglect of the war years. MacKenzie described how he used to "roll up the chiselled, like rolling up a carpet." But despite this, he found time to serve on various committees for the Royal Horticultural Society

and it was they who in 1961 awarded him the Victoria Medal of Honour, the highest accolade available to gardeners. You would have to dig hard to get him to tell you that, for as well as being a great plantsman, Bill MacKenzie was imbued with the rarest of all qualities, modesty.

Anna Favard

William Gregor MacKenzie, plantsman, gardener: born Ballinmore, Loch Fyne, Argyllshire 14 June 1904; married; died Frimley Green, Surrey 16 October 1995.

His Honour Patrick Medd

Patrick Medd's biography of Sir Samuel Romilly, the Whig parliamentarian, law reformer and spokesman for the rights and liberties of the people, was published in 1968. Behind Medd's intense personal modesty, the same qualities as Romilly's could be seen in his liberalism and humanity and in his achievements as a writer, advocate of reform, lawyer, judge and as a school governor.

During the 1950s the Inns of Court Conservative and Unionist Society was a vigorous source of reforming ideas. Medd was secretary. In that capacity he was co-author of *The Rule of Law* (1955) and of *Murder* (1956). The first of those advocated the need for access to justice by ordinary citizens in disputes with departments of state; this foreshadowed Medd's later career as president of such a tribunal. *Murder* pressed for reform of the law of homicide and for the abolition of the death penalty. *The Giant's Strength*, which he wrote in 1958, assessed and questioned the powers of the trade-union movement and its relationship with government.

Medd was born in Abingdon, in Oxfordshire. He was educated at Uppingham School and Selwyn College, Cam-

bridge, following which he trained on the Clyde to be a naval architect (his uncle had been a partner of Sir Edwin Lutyens). The Second World War came and he was commissioned with the South Staffordshire Regiment and subsequently served with the East African Artillery in Burma, reaching the rank of major. He fought in the Burma campaign, when the Japanese were driven back to the River Chindwin.

Returning from the war he joined the Middle Temple, read for the Bar and, following pupillage with Alan Orr, became a member of the chambers of Melford Stevenson QC. There Medd built up a general practice in London and on the Oxford Circuit. In 1969 he was appointed Junior Counsel to the Inland Revenue, succeeding Mr Raymond Phillips. His opinions, provided in beautiful handwriting, were greatly respected, and he represented the Crown in many complex and important appeals. He was always scrupulously fair and took pains to ensure that unrepresented appellants were not unduly disadvantaged. His transparent honesty and integrity gained him the trust and respect of judges, and of his opposing counsel.

Medd's judicial career started in 1964 as Recorder of Abingdon. From 1967 until 1971 he was deputy chairman of Shropshire Quarter Sessions. He then became a Recorder of the Crown Court and was appointed to the Circuit Bench in 1982. Throughout his time as a judge he was known for his courtesy, patience and humanity. A change in the direction of his career came in 1986 when he was appointed a part-time special commissioner to hear Inland Revenue appeals. He succeeded Lord Grantchester in 1988 as President of the VAT Tribunals and, from 1990, when he was appointed Presiding Special Commissioner, he presided over both Tribunals in their state premises in Bedford Square. This was a sensitive time. The implementation of a civil penalty code following the Keith Report on Enforcement of Revenue Powers produced a dramatic increase in the volume of appeals as did the growing effect of European directives. His decisions on penalties charted a firm but sensible and workable course through provisions which were seen by some to be unduly Draconian.

Medd's recordership of Abingdon led to his appointment to the Board of Governors



Medd: sense of balance

of Abingdon School, and from 1983 till 1990 he was chairman of the Board. During that period the school prospered and its standing and prestige grew. Medd devoted a great deal of his time and energy to school affairs, displaying his own interest in the quality of the education and the opportunities it offered. His sense of balance and his support of the school's development programme earned him the trust and respect of headmaster and staff alike. When he retired as chairman of the Board he took over the chairmanship of the appeal committee.

Patrick Medd was a passionate gardener. When at home he

always to be found, sun-bathed, working on a magnificent garden. The last of those was in Clifton Hampden, in Oxfordshire, where he entertained his friends and family in a public aid of charity.

Stephen Oliver

Patrick William Medd, lawyer: born 26 May 1919; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1947; Benchers 1969; OBE 1962; Recorder of Abingdon 1964-71; Honorary Recorder 1972-95; member, General Council of the Bar 1965-67; Deputy Chairman, Shropshire Quarter Sessions 1967-71; Junior Counsel to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue 1968-73; a Recorder of the Crown Court 1972-81; QC 1973; chairman, Board of Referees and Finance Act 1960 Tribunal 1978-91; a circuit judge 1981-92; Co-President, National Reference Tribunal for the Combining Industry 1985-95; Special Commissioner of Income Tax 1986-92; Presiding Special Commissioner 1990-92; President, VAT Tribunals 1988-92; married 1945 Jeannette Spence Powell (three daughters; marriage dissolved), 1971 Elizabeth Spinks D'Albuquerque; died 13 October 1995.

Eddie Griffiths

Amid a fanfare of trumpets, some by-election winners arrive in the House of Commons, arousing the highest expectations – and maybe the circumstances in which they arrive contrive to contribute to things going quickly wrong for them. Such a one was Eddie Griffiths.

In the high summer of 1968, the most highly charged domestic political issue related to the nationalisation of the steel industry. It was the nadir of the Wilson Government's fortunes. Nothing seemed to be going right. And then, Dick Winterbottom, master butcher by trade, the best and funniest street-corner megaphone orator I ever heard anywhere suddenly died – almost certainly largely as a result of being required to be in constant attendance in the committee room during the passage of the Iron and Steel Bill.

Out of the Welsh Blue, the party produced an apparently dream candidate for the Sheffield Brightside constituency – an industrial chemist, reared in the steel industry, who had become one of the first batch of worker-directors of the British Steel Corporation. Such was the tempo of the times, that there was even talk of catapulting Griffiths into the cabinet within months as a man who would know at first hand about recent experience at the sharp end in heavy industry – unlike all those glittering Oxford Firsts: Wilson himself, Crosland, Crossman, Healey, Jenkins, Mulley, and Stewart. The national agent, the memorable Dame Sarah Baskes, thought she had manipulated a star into position – but then as James Callaghan would tartly put it: "Sarah's swans 'do make a habit of turning into geese'." Alas this was what was to occur to Griffiths politically.

Eddie Griffiths was born in rural Flintshire with the blood of John Summers and Co, the great Shotton steel works, running in all his veins. This was particularly relevant since Summers was arguably the best-known of all British private steel companies, and caring for its workers, Griffiths told me that he did not share the adversarial attitudes found more commonly in the steel industry in south Wales, Coathbridge and Motherwell, or Sheffield. He had been born into the cosiest of all steel works. This may have provided part of the reason why he was soon on easy terms

with the dividends they want, we can only afford to carry 10, 15, 20 per cent in the export market." He believed that this philosophy should go and the BSC should use every means within its power to push its export performance to its full potential.

On the question of long-term planning, he believed that there was an acceptance in the steel industry, both in the corporation and in the British Iron Steel and Kindred Trades Association, which sponsored him, that if the industry was to remain competitive it was essential that it had low-cost production units and produced not less steel but more steel.

After the 1970 general election Griffiths, in the view of his colleagues, became a little odd and a poor attender. In retrospect what we did not realise was the extent of which he had been physically hurt in a most unpleasant mugging after leaving the House of Commons late one night.

Living far away from a constituency, is always likely to make a member more vulnerable to political manoeuvring within the constituency. One of the objections raised by the Sheffield Brightside party, where Eddie Griffiths had had a majority of 20,567 in the general election of February 1974, was that he had gone on living in Flintshire. However, the straw that probably broke the camel's back was a weekend Griffiths spent in Suffolk as the guest of the local Conservative MP for Ipswich, Ernie Ernie Money. Griffiths had gone there to preach at a harvest festival (he was a devout Christian). But before that he went with Money as a passionate football enthusiast to see Ipswich Town play Sheffield United. He also went to a Chamber of Commerce dinner and dance where he was photographed with Money and his supporters in a dinner jacket. Someone in Suffolk, probably a travelling Sheffield United supporter, tipped off the Brightside Constituency Labour Party and the Sheffield Star newspaper. And that was the end of Griffiths's political career.

In the October 1974 general election, the second of the year, the Brightside party adopted in Griffiths's place the charming and ebullient left-winger Joan Maynard, who cheerfully took it in her stride that she was nicknamed "Stain's Grandmother". Joan Maynard got 18,108 votes and retained the seat for Labour. Griffiths, standing as an Independent Labour candidate, polled 10,182 votes. After that defeat he joined the Social Democratic Party. His career was one of those might-have-beens.

Tam Dalyell

Eddie Griffiths, industrial chemist, politician: born Flintshire 7 March 1929; MP (Labour) for Sheffield Brightside 1968-74; married 1954 Ella Griffiths (one son, one daughter); died 13 October 1995.

Sir Alan Wilson

Paul Girolami's obituary of Sir Alan Wilson (9 October) rightly draws attention to his combination of distinction in both the academic and industrial worlds, and cites the example of the Industrial Fund for Education, writes Lord Bullock.

I would like to add a second example. As a result of a chance meeting in 1957 on the SS *Queen Mary*, crossing to New York, Wilson became interested in the plan for the founda-

tion of a new college at Oxford with a commitment to offer all its places in science and mathematics. His interest as always was accompanied by practical help. The operation to secure business support for the Industrial Fund was kept in being to raise the funds needed to create St Catherine's College. Wilson not only recruited Sir Hugh Beaver, then chairman of the CBI, but with his rare qualification of scientist and industri-

alist, was able to open the door to a score of the leading British companies.

It is no exaggeration to say that his advice and support were crucial to the foundation of St Catherine's. This was recognised at the time by the Oxford University when it conferred the honorary degree of DSc on him and will never be forgotten by the college which was only too happy to elect him as a Honorary Fellow.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

LAWRENCE-WILSON: On 10 October, to Debbie (nee Simms) and Richard, a son, Edward Matthew Wilson, a brother for Zoe.

DEATHS

JACKSON: Christopher Alan, of Erdington, Birmingham, on 17 October 1995, in his 26th year. Cremation and wake to be held 24 October 1995. Beloved son to Marion and Michael. Brother to Simon, Alan and Amanda. Whom the gods love dies young – Menander.

LEVY: Alfred, late of Saffron Walden, teacher. Passed away suddenly, 17 October 1995. Funeral services, 24 October, in Cambridge City Crematorium, 10am. Family flowers only. Donations to Amnesty International, c/o Harry Williams Funeral Service, telephone 01223 359480.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen attends a Dialect Foundation Conference at Dialect Park, Oxfordshire. The Duke of Edinburgh, Captain General, Royal Marines, attends a March Through the City of London by Privileged Residents at the Marlborough House, London EC2; and as Admiral, attends a dinner at the Royal Southern Yacht Club, Hamble, Southampton, Hampshire. The Princess Royal at chess a symposium, "Group Discussion on Foreign Educational Provision", at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. The Duchess of Gloucester, Patroness, The Royal School, Bath, presents the prizes at the Senior Prize Giving at the Theatre Royal Bath, to mark the 130th Anniversary of the Fencing of the school, and later opens the new Senior School.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr R. E. K. Marshall and **Miss T. L. Vignoles**
The engagement is announced between Robert, youngest son of the late Mr Keith Marshall and of Mrs K. Marshall, of Old Windsor, Berkshire, and Tiffany, daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Vignoles, of Tilford, Surrey.

Birthdays

Sir James Ackers, former chairman, West Midlands Regional Health Authority, 60; Mr Hume Boggs-Rolle, barrister and farmer, 84; Sir Edwin Bolland, former diplomat, 74; Sir Robert Stanley Booth-Chiborn, former Bishop of Manchester, 71; Mr Art Buchwald, writer, 70; Mr Chris Cowdrey, cricketer, 38; Professor Sir Bernard Crossland, mechanical engineer, 72; Mr Lawrence Daly, former trade-union leader, 71; The Right Rev Joseph Gray, Roman Catholic Bishop of Shrewsbury, 76; Mr Al Greenwood, rock musician, 44; Professor Sir Douglas Hague, chairman, Oxford Strategy Network, 69; Mr Colin Jeavons, actor, 66; Mr Eddie Macken, showjumper, 46; Judge Deirdre McKewney, circuit judge, 67; Mr John Milne Home, former Lord-Lieutenant of Dumfries and Galway, 79; Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, founder, National Motor Museum, 69; Mr Tom Petty, guitarist and singer, 42; Sir Anthony Raema, ambassador to South Africa, 57; Mr Ian Rush, footballer, 34; Professor Samuel Saul, former Vice-Chancellor, York University, 71; Sir William Shephard, chartered accountant, 83; Sir Alexander Stirling, former diplomat, 69; The Hon Emma Tennant, writer, 58; Mr Timothy West, actor, 61.

Anniversaries

Births: Sir Christopher Wren, mathematician and architect, 1632; Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston, statesman, 1784; Odilon Redon, painter and lithographer, 1840; Jean-Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud, poet, 1854; Bela Lugosi (Bela Lagoi Blasko), actor, 1884; Anna Neagle (Marjorie Robertson), actress, 1904. **Deaths:** Thomas Linacre, scholar and physician, 1524; Grace Darling, heroine at the wreck of the *Forfarshire*, 1842; Bud Flanagan (Robert Whitnour), "Crazy Gang" comedian, 1968; Sir John Anthony Quayle, actor, 1989. On this day the coronation of George I took place, 1714; the *Sunday Times* was first published, 1822; Aristotle Onassis married Jacqueline Kennedy, 1968; the Sydney Opera House was opened to the public, 1973. Today is the Feast Day of St Acia, St Andrew the Calybite of Crete, St Artemius, St Bertilla Rosemarini and St Caprasius of Agen.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Wendy Williams, "Bronze-casting in the early Renaissance", 2.30pm. **Tate Gallery:** Susan Folster, "Holbein and England", 1pm. **British Museum:** Paul Collins, "Changing Views of Mesopotamian History", 1.15pm. **Oxford University (Herbert Spencer Lecture):** Professor F. Goodell, "Genesis of Sex Determination and Differentiation", 5pm. **Gresham College:** Bernard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Heather Cooper, "Exploring the Milky Way", 1pm. **Leicester University (School of Education):** Professor Maurice Galton, "How to Succeed in Framework IV", 1pm; Judge Stephen Tumim, "Aspects of Prisons", 8pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Sir Nicholas Bonsor Bt MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a lunch yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, for Mr Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. **Polish Literary Luncheon:** Mr Paul Johnson was in the chair at the 628th Polish Literary Luncheon held yesterday at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London W1, in honour of Sir Kingsley Amis, and to celebrate the publication of *The Biographer's Moustache*. Among those present were: Mr Alan Coren; Mr Winston Graham; Lady Healey; The Countess of Londonderry; The Earl of Londonderry; Sir Peregrine Worrest.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 5.42pm. **United Synagogue:** 0171-387 4300. **Federation of Synagogues:** 0181-202 2243. **Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues:** 0171-580 1663. **Reform Synagogues of Great Britain:** 0181-349 4731. **Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation:** 0171-289 2573. **New London Synagogue (Masorti):** 0171-328 1026.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding announcements, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DU, telephoned to 0171-239 2611 (24-hour answering machine 0171-239 2612) or faxed to 0171-239 2616, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Cable cancer risk did not call for new rules

LAW REPORT

20 October 1995

Regina v Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, ex parte Duddridge and others; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Kennedy, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Sir Iain Gildewell) 6 October 1995

The unproven possibility that electromagnetic fields (EMFs) from high-voltage cables forming part of the national grid might increase the risk of children in the locality developing leukaemia was not enough to impose on the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry an obligation, either under domestic or European law, to issue regulations limiting such EMFs.

The Court of Appeal refused an application for leave to appeal against the decision of the Queen's Bench Divisional Court, on 3 October 1994, refusing an application for judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision not to issue regulations limiting EMFs from cables laid by National Grid plc or other licence-holders under the Electricity Act 1989.

The application was brought on behalf of three children, Lloyd Duddridge, Danielle Dye and Naomi Holliday, who lived in South Woodford near where National Grid plc were laying a new high-voltage underground cable. It was alleged that the non-lounging radia-

tion emitted from these cables, well in excess of the average domestic level, would expose them to a risk of developing leukaemia.

Section 3(3) of the 1989 Act imposed on the Secretary of State a duty to exercise his functions under the Act in the manner best calculated "to protect the public from dangers arising from the generation, transmission or supply of electricity". Section 29 empowered him to make regulations to issue regulations limiting such EMFs.

The applicants argued that the Secretary of State should take a "precautionary view" of the risk from EMFs and should lay down regulations to control it. **Michael Beloff QC and Graham Reed (Leigh, Day & Co) for the applicants; Stephen Richards and Ian Barnes (Trethowan Solicitors) for the Secretary of State; Alan Griffiths (Freshfields) for National Grid plc.**

Sir Iain Gildewell said it was clear that if there was a risk of personal injury or damage to property arising from the transmission of electricity through the new cables, the Secretary of State was under a duty to protect the public from that risk

by making appropriate regulations. But the expert evidence adduced in the Divisional Court did not establish there was such a risk. The furthest it went was as stated by Dr J. A. Dennis, a former member of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), who said:

The totality of the scientific evidence points to the weak possibility that prolonged exposure to power frequency magnetic fields, while not a direct causal factor in inducing human leukaemias, may enhance the risks of these cancers, especially in young children.

The applicants' other expert, Professor Scott Davies, concluded:

I do not believe that a causal relationship has yet been established. Nevertheless... that such exposure may increase the risk of childhood leukaemia cannot be dismissed, given the current evidence.

The Secretary of State's case was that this was insufficient to impose on him a duty to act. The applicants argued that he had set the threshold too high, and if there was evidence of a possible risk he was under a duty to use his powers to obviate it. That was the standard adopted as government policy

in a white paper of 1990, "This Common Inheritance".

The Secretary of State was said to be under a duty to adopt what was called the "precautionary principle" in order to comply with European Community law. On this point, the applicants also sought to refer the case to the European Court of Justice. They relied on article 130r of the Treaty of Rome, as amended by the Maastricht Treaty, and incorporated into English law by the European Communities Act 1972, as amended by the 1993 Act.

In his Lordship's judgment, the court could resolve the issue without referring it to Europe. Article 130r set out the aims which Community policy on the environment should be designed to achieve; it did not of itself place any obligation on any organ of a national government. The creation of a policy on the environment required a decision by, and action such as the promulgation of a directive by, the organs of the Community. If or when such a measure was adopted, the Secretary of State would be under whatever obligation it imposed; at present he was under no such obligation.

Lord Justice Kennedy and Lord Justice Peter Gibson agreed.

The Astburys were optimistic about their conjoined twins. But 'bad luck' ruined the babies' chances of survival. Jojo Moyes reports

Siamese twins: when fate steps in

All Melanie Astbury ever wanted was "normal healthy babies". She had been "deliriously happy" at the discovery she and her husband Brian were expecting twins. But this was replaced by numbness when in May this year a scan revealed those twins were joined at the stomach. "I felt my world had fallen apart," she said.

Their consultant told them the chances of twins surviving a separation were "very good" but that they had to make a choice as to whether to abort. "We walked around for a week in a total mental fog," said Brian Astbury at the time, but added: "We never seriously discussed termination ... Our babies will be born out of love into love. Everything else rests with

on the day before she was due to give birth described Melanie Astbury as "a picture of radiant motherhood. Her eyes shine, her skin has that special glow that pregnant women have and she exudes an aura of peace and contentment ..."

But elsewhere, the couple's decision to go through with the birth elicited a fierce debate. This was opened by Polly Tynbee who, in a response to the *Mail's* article, wrote a piece in this newspaper entitled "Sentimentality is not enough", in which she suggested the couple should have been encouraged to consider abortion. This brought a fierce reply from, among others, Dominic Lawson, then editor of the *Spectator* and himself the father of a daughter with Down's Syndrome, who said: "If anything could truly be described as chilling it is the mind of Polly Tynbee."

Amid the relative peace of the maternity ward, Melanie Astbury gave birth to daughters Chloe and Nicole by Caesarean section at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, on 14 September. The first conjoined twins born in Britain for nearly 10 years, they were joined from the breastbone to the navel.

Although they also shared a bowel, they had separate hearts, limbs and spinal cords. They also shared a liver, but this organ has the power to regenerate itself if divided. The Astburys were said to be "overwhelmed and speechless with joy" at their daughters' birth. Melanie Astbury, on seeing them for the first time, described them as "beautiful".

Doctors said the twins were "stable and progressing satisfactorily" in the hospital's special baby unit. Three days later, on 18 September, they underwent an 11-hour operation to separate their bowels, which had become tangled in the womb, and the following day consultant paediatric surgeon Alan Dickson, who performed the operation, described it as successful and was "cautiously optimistic" that the twins would be able to eat normally within a year.

But four days later he admitted the extent of the bowel damage was a disappointment. "It is quite likely to have implications for the separation, but I am not pre-



The short lives of Chloe and Nicole Astbury

May 1995: Melanie and Brian Astbury are told they are expecting identical twins.
14 September: Chloe and Nicole are born by Caesarean section at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, at 22.18 pm. They share a liver.
18 September: Doctors begin an 11-hour operation to separate the twins' entangled bowels.
21 September: Chloe and Nicole breathe for the first time.
24 September: Melanie Astbury returns home from hospital.
18 October: The twins die of necrotising enterocolitis, a condition which affects the bowel and causes severe inflammation.

pared to speculate on it," he said.

Nevertheless, the last time the hospital chiefs commented on Chloe and Nicole's condition, they said staff were "quietly pleased" with their progress. Doctors were waiting for the twins to become strong enough to undergo a full separation, which was not expected to happen for at least a year. But on 21 September they were taken off a ventilator and were able to breathe normally for the first time.

Shortly afterwards their mother was allowed home. Melanie Astbury, 25, who also has a three-year-old son, returned daily to St Mary's to help care for her daughters. "I'm washing their faces now and changing nappies, so I feel much more involved as a mother," she said. "I haven't bathed them yet but I hope to soon."

Feelings about the birth, however, were still running high. Last Monday the parents appeared on ITV's *This Morning* show and revealed that they had received hate-mail because of their decision not to terminate. They had thrown the letters from the "sickos" away, they said. They added that an operation to separate their daughters was "inevitable", but they had "no regrets" about going through with the births.

They had every reason to feel confident. The babies had progressed much better than could reasonably have been expected after their major operation four weeks ago. They had been fed on milk, both orally and through a tube to the abdomen. So pleased was the hospital with the twins' progress that last Friday doctors had discussed with the Astburys the possibility of the babies being discharged.

But last weekend Chloe became affected by a bowel disease known as necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), which spread to other vital organs. Joined so closely to her sister, she could not fail to pass on the disease and over the next three days both babies had gradually deteriorated from the infection - which has a 25 per cent mortality rate among babies who develop it.

Alan Dickson said yesterday that it had always been in the doctors' minds that they might have to operate to save one of the children. But both of them had deteriorated at such a rate that the doctors had decided the best option was to support them both and

hope that they both made a recovery.

At 12.45am on Wednesday, Mr Dickson called the Astburys and asked them to come to the hospital. There he advised them that no more could be done for the twins and that they were going to die. "We asked if they wanted to come and spend some time with the babies then, but they were unable to do so, such was their distress," he said.

The twins were put on life-support systems, but an hour later Mr Dickson broke the news to the couple that the twins had died "of their own accord". They spent a short time with their children before leaving the hospital early on Wednesday morning.

Yesterday Mr Dickson emphasised that the outlook

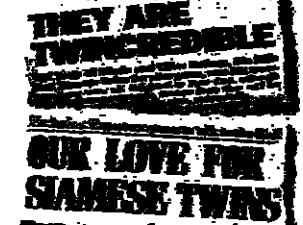


had been good for the twins and that Chloe and Nicole had been the victims of "bad luck". "It is very bad luck to be a conjoined twin in the first place. Our information on the scans was very encouraging. But, as you know, they had an operation revealing congenital problems with the gut far beyond what we could have expected," he said.

"To come through what they came through in the first 11 days of life and then to be hit with this out of the blue was extremely bad luck." The doctor said medical staff had remained optimistic that the babies could have looked forward to normal lives.

The Astburys were described yesterday as "devastated". "Melanie and Brian were full of hope and this turn of events was totally unexpected for them both," said Ms McWatt. She made a personal plea to the media to allow Mr and Mrs Astbury to grieve in private. "They have to be allowed to deal with this in their own way and, in particular, in a private way," she said.

Sources at the *Daily Mail* yesterday said it "had not been decided" whether the paper would run a subsequent interview with the Astburys. "I think that would be up to the parents," the source said.



fate and the surgeon's skills." They rang the hospital and told the doctors the next morning. "They were delighted," he said.

Elsewhere, people were less hopeful and considerably less bullish. Dr Michael Marech, Melanie Astbury's consultant obstetrician, warned presciently at the time that the couple seemed "too optimistic ... the risks are enormous for both children, as there could be so many abnormalities not defined in ultrasound, such as shared gut and other abdominal abnormalities". If his wife was pregnant with conjoined twins, what would he have wanted? "I would have to say termination," he said. Had he said that to the Astburys? "No."

The pregnancy continued in secret until early last month when first reports of the impending birth found their way into the Sunday newspapers. The couple's solicitor, Andrea McWatt, shielded their identity until their story was swiftly bought for an undisclosed sum by Ian Monk of the *Daily Mail* and a series of in-depth interviews followed.

The tone of these interviews was consistently one of hope triumphing over adversity. The article that appeared

Witkes's

Ian Lang may have the sex appeal of a Scottish pallbearer to voters south of the border, but Wilkes hears that he is now The Chosen One. John Major's friends are saying in the privacy of their drawing rooms that the new President of the Board of Trade is the Prime Minister's preferred choice to succeed him when he goes. Mr Major has no wish to repeat Baroness Thatcher's mistake of going on, and on, and on, if - against all the odds - he wins the next election. He will stand down and tend his bank balance and, according to some close to Mr Major, will certainly have gone by the end of 1998.

The succession is therefore a live issue. Mr Lang is regarded by Major as sound in all particulars, and not easily pushed around by the right wing, which will be on the rampage once Mr Major goes. This is the last chance for the left to secure its influence in the choice of leader, while the right is still hopelessly split between Messrs Redwood and Portillo. Hence Wilkes advises buying shares in Lang.

He may have an exterior as long-faced as an Edinburgh terrace, but he is very good company over venison and chips and has an impressive humour pedigree, being a contemporary of the famous Footlights set, who went on to create Monty Python. He is also a wonderful mimic: if ever he did become Prime Minister, Rory Bremner might as well join the drole queue.

Wilkes is, of course, hedging his bets by putting money on Gillian Shephard. But remember you heard Mr Lang's name here first. After all, it makes compelling sense in one respect: if Labour wins the election and introduces a Scottish parliament, who better to mastermind a quiet U-turn in Tory policy by agreeing to retain that body than Lang - the man who 20 years earlier argued that an assembly was the way to revive Tory fortunes north of the border?



Venison, chips and a big future

about what colleagues regard as the further self-aggrandisement of Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary and Supreme Being. Her Majesty's Chief Minister for Titles has moved into temporary premises at the Treasury, pending refurbishment of his vast suite of rooms in the Cabinet Office. He has found a suitably immense room to his liking for the regular meetings of his Cabinet committee.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Wilkes hears, was amazed to discover this Treasury room existed and raised an eyebrow at the thought of the Supreme One moving into his territory. The Lion King sits in an imposing leather chair. Unprepared victims sink unsuspectingly into extremely deep and large sofas opposite. Those shorter in the leg find it difficult to bend their knees, let alone reach the floor, and need a block and tackle to haul them out again.

To put the rest of the Cabinet at their ease, the Sun King regularly chairs the meeting in a V-necked sweater - some uncharitable souls pointedly remark how his woolly matches his ability to grasp detail.

Wilkes can advise Labour not to bother reserving a seat on its benches in the House of Lords for Baroness Thatcher. Despite Tony Blair's overtures about respecting the Iron Lady, she will not be coming across. Thatcher has become a Majorite. She informed Wilkes at her "do" at Claridges this week (where she and the Queen again clashed over their choice of dress) that all her past differences with Major have been buried, and she will campaign for him at the next election. The Prime Minister's decision to roll out the red carpet for her 70th birthday party at Downing Street did the trick. "It was a total love-in," said an admirer.

There was an added filip for Clare Short, Labour's wimmin's spokesperson, as she battled her way back into the Shadow Cabinet in Wednesday's elections. Her assistant Virginia Heywood won the sweepstakes on the results of the increasingly

hilarious event. Wilkes finds it difficult to imagine Tony Blair will put up with it much longer.



Just the ticket

Just deserts generally come to those who wait. Wilkes is reassured to learn: Sir Philip (Phil) Harris, carpet magnate, deputy chairman of the Conservative Party's board of treasurers and the man who bankrolled the hi-tech Sir Philip Harris House at Guy's Hospital, could be destined for even higher things. He is being heavily tipped by Tory peers for a seat in the Lords in the next honours list, on account of his fine record in raising money, which has helped a beleaguered Conservative Central Office reduce its overdraft from £11.4m in August to a mere £9.9m. He will also play a crucial part in building up a £22m "war chest" for the election.

Deep mystery persists, however, about the future of Sir Basil Feldman, chairman of the National Union, the party's voluntary wing. Will he be passed over yet again? At least Wilkes's good friend Jeffrey Archer is well on his way to complete reintegration. Not only did he resurrect his fabled shepherd's pie and Krug parties at the Tory party conference last week - at which, incidentally, Wilkes was unable to spot Kenneth Clarke amid an otherwise full Cabinet turn-out - but he has re-instituted those fabled nationwide speaking tours. After 18 months out in the political cold, he is pulling crowds of up to 400 at meetings.

Perhaps the most extraordinary rehabilitation of all was that of John Profumo. At Lady Thatcher's birthday dinner, he and his wife were seated next to the Queen.

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Heat but no light in the Commons

Yesterday's furious Commons debate on the prison service produced a great deal of heat but little light. We are no nearer to knowing whether Michael Howard or Derek Lewis is telling the truth about what really happened in the aftermath of the Parkhurst break-out.

The Home Secretary gave a typically robust performance. He stuck to his position that he did not interfere in the operational control of prisons. In particular, he denied that he had tried to force Mr Lewis to suspend John Marriott, the Parkhurst governor.

Meanwhile, Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, backed up by Tony Blair, repeated Mr Lewis's claims that Mr Howard not only intervened daily in the running of Britain's prisons, but tried to bully Mr Lewis into suspending the governor. But it was not Labour's day: Mr Howard was the better swordsman. Mr Straw proved no match.

The debate was a miserable spectacle. Braying MPs did not bother to discuss this week's Lament report, which represents a damning indictment of security in Britain's jails. All that seemed to bother Labour was whether the party could destroy the political career of Mr Howard. And the Home Secretary seemed to have, as ever, only one thing on his mind: protecting and enhancing his own and his party's prospects.

Labour's narrow agenda is depressing. But the source of the problem in this controversy remains Mr Howard. Yesterday's debate became obsessed with the obscure detail of what he did and when, because this Home Secretary is so determined to

avoid responsibility for even the smallest action which might be judged embarrassing. In a torrent of self-righteousness, he will blame anyone but himself.

This style has characterised so many of the events that have taken place since the Parkhurst break-out. First there was the showy, unconstructive haste in removing Mr Marriott from the jail. Then on Monday there was the rush to sack Mr Lewis as director-general of the prison service. Letters we publish today from Sir Duncan Nichol, a member of the Prison Board and a highly experienced Whitehall operator, show the strength of support on that board for Mr Lewis and his achievements over the past three years.

They also demonstrate the urgent need in the prison service for clear leadership and organisational stability. The primary challenge facing the prison service, says Sir Duncan, "is managerial - how to close the gap between strategic intent and action on the ground. This requires further clarification at all levels of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities."

A Home Secretary addicted to the soundbite looks incapable of supplying that strategic direction. Last week, he turned aside without debate the objections by the Lord Chief Justice to fixed sentences, ignoring the pressures this would place on the size of the prison population. This week, responding to the Lament report, he failed to offer a credible plan to house maximum security prisoners. Goodness knows what kind of brief Mr Howard has in mind for Mr Lewis's successor. Those of a logical disposition need not apply.

Prudence and the pill, revisited

It was supposed to be the safer one. One and a half million women will be popping the little white capsules tonight, wondering wearily if they have to change brand once more.

The Department of Health announced yesterday that women who take certain newer brands of the contraceptive pill - the grimly named Mefenocine, Minulet, Triadene, Tri-Minulet, Marvelon and Mercilon - should go back to see their doctor. They used to think that these low-dose pills, which combine both oestrogen and two particular types of the hormone progesterone, reduced the risk of blood clots in the veins (compared to the older oestrogen-only varieties). It turns out that they were wrong. For this particular side-effect, the older ones are better after all.

Grounds for switching pills? Probably. After all, if you are going to take a drug for years, you might as well take the one that is marginally safer. Grounds for forgetting that pill tonight? Definitely not.

So what is this new risk? For the one and a half million women taking the newer, low-dose combined pills at the moment, about 450 are likely to get blood clots in their veins each year. Of those 450 women, about nine are likely to die from them.

If they all switched to other brands, such as the older oestrogen-only pill, the number contracting thrombosis would fall to around 250, and deaths would be reduced to five. That is four lives saved, and 200 women spared a lot of discomfort. But bear in mind that numerous

women take the pill, so these risks are relatively small. And even if all of these women came off the pill completely, there would still be around 75 cases a year, and one or two deaths.

Even more important, if they all stopped taking the pill tomorrow and became pregnant instead, their chance of getting thrombosis would double.

Given the nature of the figures, there are certainly no grounds for panic. And it is unclear whether everyone should switch to other pills. Many women have reactions to the older pills. And the relative risks of other side-effects, such as heart attack or breast cancer, are still unknown.

Which raises another question: why do we not know more about the various side-effects yet? Thrombosis was first raised as a concern 35 years ago. In this latest case the answer may lie partly in the fact that it's hard to study low-risk side-effects until there are large numbers of women taking the pills, and enough of them suffering from thrombosis. It is also true that post-sales research into the pill has been more extensive than into any other drug. But when you consider that so many millions of women take this drug, that they are healthy rather than sick and that they take it for such long periods - contraceptive pills may merit even more research than they already attract.

In the end, millions of women will carry on taking the pill. And they are right. The risks remain overwhelmingly outweighed by the benefits of choosing when to have a baby.

ANOTHER VIEW Garth Morrisson

Scouting for scandals

Last week it was Gladstone; this week it is Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouting movement, who comes under the unsympathetic glare of sensationalist documentary makers. Who knows which outstanding figure from history will next undergo trial by television or the press?

It is right and proper that we should look back and consider how great figures from the past have achieved their place in history. In doing so we should question the criteria by which we make those measurements - the social background of their day, or today's conventions? What is the agenda of those making these measurements, and where lie the commercial interests in the broadcasting of programmes purporting to depict these lives from the past?

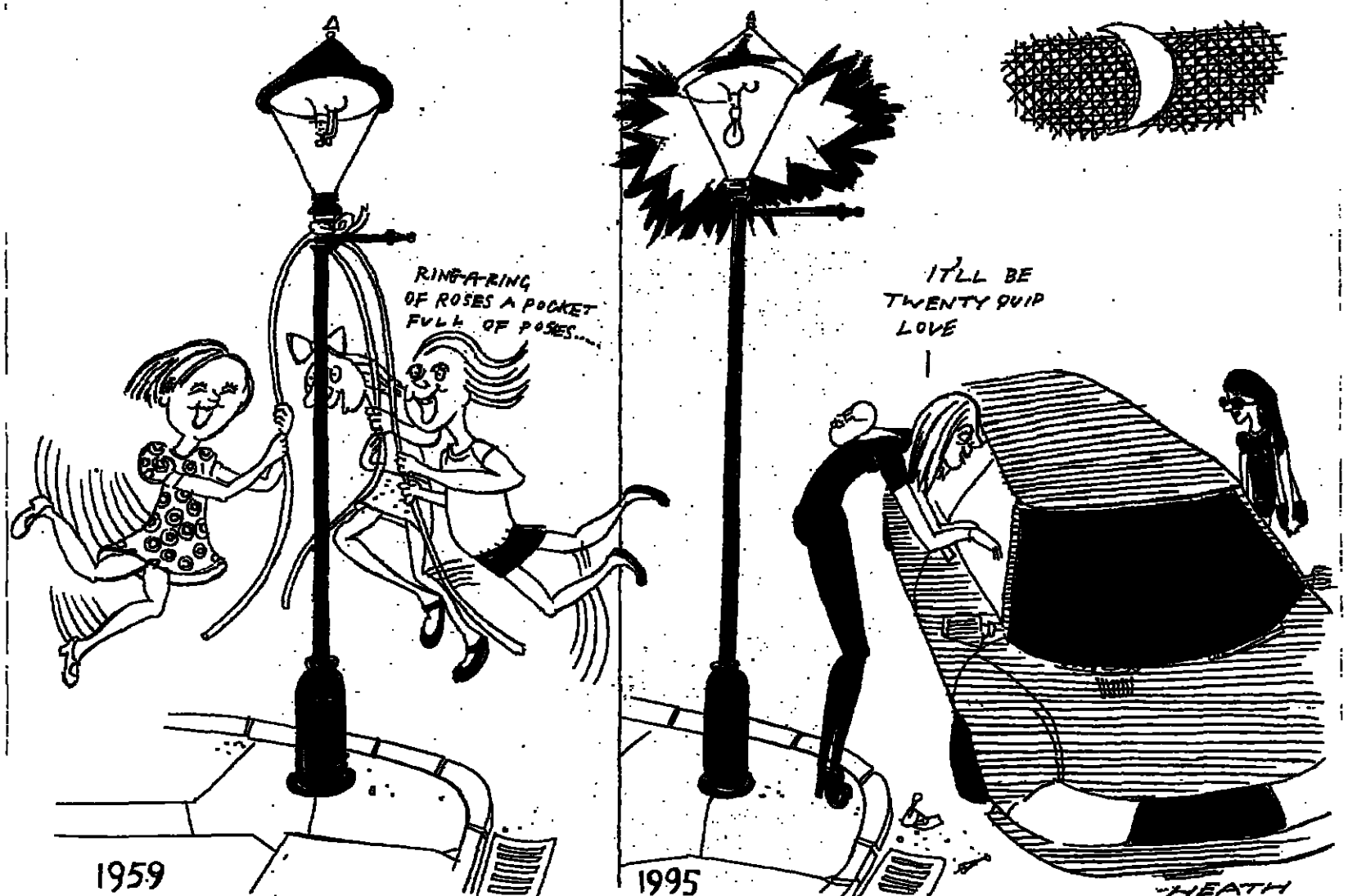
We know that in the summer Channel 4 was circulating information to potential advertisers, inviting them to buy into a programme that "looks behind the upright image of one of the world's most famous men". The invitation referred to "confused sexuality", "latent sadism" and even a "flirtation with the Hitler Youth movement". We know that even as this information was being circulated the team researching the documentary was still combing the archives and setting up interviews with people who knew Baden-Powell. Even as I write the programme is unfinished, but the Channel 4 publicity machine has been announcing the sensational details of its content and emphasis.

Of course there is a connection between commercial interest in selling more advertising space and an appeal to prurience which advertising salesmen know only too well. Perhaps it does not matter much if one believes that the average viewer discerns that in the midst of all the visual material broadcast today truth and objective judgement can be casualties, but one is entitled to be dubious about that - how else can one explain the inordinate public interest in these matters?

It does matter very much if the intrusion of the commercial interest results in a portrayal so distorted as to destroy the public perception of a great figure from the past - which is what I fear may happen here. It can so easily lead to denigration of the outstanding achievements and a cynical disdain for those who admire them.

Let's not forget the extraordinary achievements of Lord Baden-Powell. With amazing imagination and originality he created a movement that has brought excitement and adventure to many millions of boys and girls across the world through Scouting and Guiding. His methods were revolutionary at the time, but have stood the test of time, having been adopted by many other educational bodies. His vision has enabled us to overcome the barriers set up by those who have little to contribute but to carp, criticise and denigrate the efforts of others.

The writer is the Chief Scout.



Children's street games then and now

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nuclear safety: commitment and credibility

From Mr John G. Collier

Sir: I want to demolish the canard that privatisation will have any adverse impact on nuclear safety at Britain's nuclear power stations ("Nuclear sell-off: a threat to safety", 18 October). I write as chairman of Nuclear Electric plc with over 40 years' experience in the nuclear industry, much of it directly related to safety.

Over the past five years Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear have both achieved

exceptionally high safety standards while at the same time considerably enhancing their commercial performance. Safety and performance are complementary; they are the hallmarks of a quality company.

More importantly, there can be no compromise on safety as a result of privatisation because the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate will continue to regulate the same stations in the same way, to the same very high standards. It is worth noting that in their submissions to the Government's Nuclear Review, the NII and the Health and Safety Executive said they saw no need to change these arrangements.

Both NE and SNL have an absolute commitment to safety. We have done this by adopting the best management practices in both the safety and commercial fields. Performance indicators for safety staff are not driven by profit. Their prime targets are demonstrable enhancement of safety as measured by a series of performance indicators given in our published annual health and safety reports. By any objective standards this has proved successful - all our health and safety indicators (radiation dose to workers, incident statistics, etc)

are far improved since both companies' formation in 1990.

Nuclear power will not survive if our stations are not operated to the highest levels of safety - but then our staff will not permit anything less.

Yours sincerely, JOHN G. COLLIER, Chairman, Nuclear Electric, Gloucester 18 October

From Mr Phil Carpenter

Sir: The article "Nuclear sell-off: a threat to safety" (18 October) quoted Scottish Nuclear as saying that safety in the nuclear industry "is regulated by the independent Nuclear Installations Inspectorate".

As the trade union which represents all of the Health and Safety Executive's inspectors and other specialist staff, the Institute of Professional Managers and Specialists (IPMS) is ideally placed to comment on the resources for regulation and the morale of the staff who undertake the regulation. Over the course of the last few years the Government's attitude to the funding of the Health and Safety Executive has changed markedly.

A couple of years ago, there was a consensus between the Government and the Health and Safety Commission to the extent that the HSE's very reasonable and modest bids for financial resources to run the organisation were always met in full. The past three years have seen the HSE's budget cut by more than 10 per cent, and even more substantial cuts are anticipated for 1996-97. The results have been cuts in staffing levels which have, up until now, been

covered by the dedication of HSE's staff, who have attempted to ensure that vital work has not been left undone.

Over the past two years, however, the pace of change in HSE (forced by government-driven cuts and initiatives) has dramatically increased. This year, staff morale in HSE has reached as low a point as people can remember.

The "independence" of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has, up until now, been guaranteed by ensuring that their pay levels have been analogous to the pay levels in the nuclear industry.

The Government has seen fit to ensure that the pay levels for HSE staff, including NII, can be maintained only at the price of job cuts. The pay determination mechanism has until now enabled NII to maintain its professionalism and credibility with the nuclear industry; that is now at risk.

Along with all other HSE staff, the NII are being given stark choice pay increases and job cuts (which mean that workloads increase and morale and safety suffer) or no pay increases and smaller job cuts (which has exactly the same result). The Government's fixed view that "efficiency" only results when fewer staff are employed is clearly flawed.

Yours faithfully, PHIL CARPENTER, Negotiations Officer, IPMS: Institution of Professional Managers and Specialists, Liverpool 18 October

Positive approach to racial discrimination

From Mr Austen Cooper

Sir: Michael Gottlieb's difficulty in persuading black people to work for Smoother's restaurants (letter, 12 October) is easily solved. The Race Relations Act 1976 contains provisions for "positive action" measures to be taken. These include providing training for, and encouraging applications from, under-represented racial groups. Further details and advice can be obtained from the nearest offices of the Race Relations Employment Advisory Service and the Commission for Racial Equality.

Yours faithfully, AUSTEN COOPER, Croydon, Surrey

From Mr John Clark

Sir: Although I did not read the article concerning the shortage of

blacks in senior positions in industry (10 October), I did read the letter by Michael Gottlieb in which he states that the only reason for the shortage is the fact that they do not apply.

It was exactly this view, put by employers 10 years ago, that led to the establishment of the Windsor Fellowship. The fellowship is unique in the UK in supporting black and Asian undergraduates through a competency-based programme run during their vacations to prepare them for management positions in the private and public sectors.

Mr Gottlieb states that "businessmen are extremely practical people". This is true, and it is these people who provide the financial support and relevant work experience for the undergraduates on our programmes.

After working with the undergraduates, the companies and the Civil Service departments often offer them permanent jobs, and some are now in senior or middle management positions.

However, there are very few senior black managers, and this gives young black people a clear message in terms of career expectations. For young blacks in Britain to believe in the existence of opportunities requires that organisations join those working with the Windsor Fellowship to put some effort into changing the message, so they can reap the benefits of attracting talented black and Asian staff.

Yours sincerely, JOHN CLARK, Chief Executive, The Windsor Fellowship, London, E2 13 October

Barings' lesson

From Mr Adil Dede

Sir: Since Nick Leeson's "hidden error account", with its huge losses accumulated over the years, brought down Barings, Daiwa's Toshihide Iguchi has reaffirmed that hundreds of millions of dollars of hidden losses can go undetected, albeit in a different form and using different instruments. In their report on Barings, Singapore's inspectors highlight that bank's failure to analyse and understand Leeson's request for large sums of funds as a major contribution to Barings' collapse (report, 18 October).

Companies with large securi-

ties operations, such as Barings and Daiwa, hold huge multi-currency positions in a variety of instruments, and thus have hundreds of millions of daily funding requirement. The funding of these positions also includes any realised profit/loss resulting from the company's daily trading activities. In summary: total funding = (total position \pm profit/loss).

In the case of Barings, losses were hidden in an "error account" that was not reported, but these losses still had to be funded. This funding was done through Barings' London office. It may be reasonable that funding of hidden losses of a few million pounds a day (which would

be included in the huge overall funding) would not be noticed on a day-to-day basis; but as these losses accumulate gradually, the overall funding would increase in parallel.

If Barings had had in place a regular report comparing the total positions against the total funding, a gradually increasing gap would have been seen and it would have been possible to take the necessary action before it became too late.

Yours, ADIL DEDE, Senior Manager, Treasury Department, Daiwa Europe Limited, London, EC4

Calling the CSA to account

From Mr Richard Oppenheimer

Sir: The response by Tony Ward, director of operations at the Child Support Agency (Letters, 16 October), to Polly Toynbee's article is misleading.

Last year, as a result of its own actions, the CSA collected \$64m of maintenance for offset against state funds, at a cost of \$192.4m. The remaining \$128m was revenue brought forward from the old Liable Relatives Unit and for which the CSA can claim no credit. By contrast, in its last year, the Liable Relatives Unit offset \$131m of maintenance against state funds, at a cost of \$61m.

Of the 500,000 cases which the CSA handled last year, more than three-quarters were cleared with the absent parent being asked for £230 a week or less, and because of the nature of the formula many people who were previously paying at least something are now effectively paying nothing. That is why the number of people receiving maintenance has now fallen to an all-time low.

Ms Toynbee is right to ask if the CSA is on the verge of collapse. It is doomed to failure on financial grounds alone. The arithmetic of the CSA's assessment formula dictates that it will never be able to offset as much maintenance against state funds as the system it replaced. The simple truth is that, over three years, replacing the Liable Relatives Unit with the CSA has delivered a loss to the taxpayer of £1.1bn.

Yours faithfully, RICHARD OPPENHEIMER, Network Against the Child Support Act, Milton Keynes 18 October

From Lord Russell

Sir: Since Tony Ward (letter, 16 October) is accusing Polly Toynbee of "recycling information", which comes from the Liberal Democrats, I may be allowed a right of reply.

I am always ready to listen to serious statistics, providing I can understand how they were arrived at. I would therefore like to ask Mr Ward some questions about the £479m of savings in social security benefits which he credits to the Child Support Agency.

First, can he confirm or deny that any single parent who comes off benefits for whatever reason is included in these figures?

Second, does he agree with Andrew Mitchell MP in his letter to Liz Lynne MP of 6 September that single parents may come off benefit for many other reasons, such as getting a job or getting married?

Third, can he give a comparison between the single parent who came off benefits since the introduction of the CSA and during the period before its introduction?

Finally, has he found a way of correcting his figures to ensure that the CSA does not claim credit for any improvements resulting from the Chancellor's decision in 1993 to increase the benefit disregard for single parents on family credit?

When Mr Ward has answered these questions, we could have something to talk about.

Yours, RUSSELL, House of Lords, London, SW1 16 October
The writer is Liberal Democrat social security spokesman.

Sting too rich to notice?

From Mr Christopher Burley

Sir: Was Sting too rich to notice his ex-accountant, Keith Moore, had stolen over £6m, for which Keith Moore has been sent to prison for six years? As Sting's solicitor and the person involved in recovering nearly all the stolen monies (report, 18 October), hopefully the following description of the fraud will put the record straight.

All Sting's and his companies' income received in respect of his career was paid into bank accounts on which only Sting or his wife could sign. This was except for very specific and safeguarded situations, such as paying tax, VAT and tour expenses. As this was the case and as Sting signed thousands of individual cheques over the years, like anyone else having bank accounts he felt in complete control of them. Keith Moore, as his accountant, had the responsibility for reviewing Sting's bank statements and to advise Sting on where his monies should go. No one else received copies of Sting's bank statements, not only because his personal finances are confidential to him, his accountant and the tax authorities, but because as Sting and his wife controlled those accounts there was no reason for anyone else to be involved.

Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER BURLEY, Burley and Co Solicitors, London, WC2 18 October

Keith Moore not only defrauded Sting, but also various banks, a publishing company and the Inland Revenue. The fact that he managed to defraud so many normally careful business people illustrates the devious and clever nature of the fraud, which was practised by Keith Moore under the umbrella of a large number of banks and bank accounts. Such bank accounts are not unusual for an internationally successful music artist, with large amounts of income being received and legitimate expenses being paid out constantly. Neither Sting nor anyone else would spot a fraud which took the Fraud Squad three years to prove.

It was a clever fraud perpetrated against many people. However, with my help, that of Nick Valner of Frere Cholmeley Bischoff and that of Sting's manager, Miles Copeland, nearly all the money has been recovered. The monies were not recovered from the people who benefited from the fraud, but from people who were taken in by Keith Moore and who, sadly for them, have had to refund Sting out of their own, albeit corporate, pockets.

Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER BURLEY, Burley and Co Solicitors, London, WC2 18 October

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What are women to make of Farrakhan?

The black male crisis of identity will not be solved by demanding a return to traditional gender roles

For the first time in a generation, black America has this week put itself on the mainstream map. For the media, the most striking thing about Monday's Million Man March on Washington was that all of the 400,000 present were black. But just as important for the long-term may be the fact that they were all men. Whereas Martin Luther King's rally three decades ago embraced black and white, women as well as men, Louis Farrakhan's march kept women away. No longer is one emancipation - that of race - automatically linked to that of gender.

The reason is simple. The crisis besetting America's black community is a crisis of black masculinity. The collapse of the US's manufacturing base since the Fifties has hit unskilled black men the hardest. By 1964, the year after King's march on Washington, black unemployment was running at 12 per cent, more than double the rate for whites - and one reason why King, when he was assassinated, was turning to jobs as the key issue. (Sidney Wilhelm, author of *Who Needs the Negro?*, describes the shift thus: "Increasingly he [the black man] is not so much exploited as he is irrelevant. The dominant whites no longer need to exploit the black minority.") Today, while black unemployment rates overall are static at 11.3 per cent, teenage black unemployment is 36.4 per cent, almost two and a half times the rate for white teenagers.

Economic redundancy is not the only problem. It has been matched by redundancy in the family: 68 per cent

of black households are now headed by single mothers, and with one in three black men under 30 in prison, or on probation or parole, a wider process of disconnection is under way.

In the UK there are similar trends. A report published by the TUC this week, aptly called *Black and Betrayed*, found that if you are black you are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites. In London it is even worse, with three out of five young black men unemployed.

Here, many people respond by wanting to push forward the liberal agenda of rights. But in the US many see the emergence of Farrakhan as a straightforward result of the failure of the liberal agenda. A survey by the *Washington Post* found that 81 per cent of black Americans feel there is a dearth of black American leaders capable of articulating black concerns. Old civil rights organisations are seen to have been tried and found wanting. The OJ Simpson trial vividly captured the racist underbelly of white America. Many of the tools by which King and others hoped his dream would come true have crumbled. Even the success story of the past 30 years - the burgeoning black American middle class - are resentful because they have gained income but are still denied respect.

We are now seeing the results of this swing away from the liberal agenda. One indicator is a shift in language away from rights towards responsibility, self-reliance and self-esteem. Another is the emphasis on enterprise,



HELEN WILKINSON

The opportunity is lost for black men to learn self reliance from their women

which appeals to Farrakhan's numerous middle-class supporters. According to one poll, 69 per cent of the people on the march had an annual income of more than \$30,000 and 59 per cent had attended college.

However, the key point is that for Farrakhan and his followers the priority is liberation from within rather than from the outside. Blacks must all become agents of their own destiny and the black community of men, in particular, needs to sort itself out.

Farrakhan's appeal to black men to take pride in themselves once again, to reclaim their communities and be responsible to their families is one that many black women will endorse. After all, many have struggled for years to be the best possible mothers to their children, and have kept their commu-

lities going against the odds while many black men have gone astray. Monday's events may lead to the redirection of energies that Farrakhan pleaded for, that blacks should organise, register to vote, join political parties, shape their own destiny.

This was more than a plea for black activism. Instead of seeking salvation through the constitutional system, black America must, in Farrakhan's view, reject the slave mentality of a victim group calling for rights and entitlements. They must recognise that rights without responsibilities are meaningless. This is, of course, a subliminally threatening message for the white majority, precisely because Farrakhan is arguing that blacks should no longer depend on them. In this sense the politics he espouses symbolises a shift away from a culture of victimhood to power politics.

Yet, modern as his politics is and in ways that white commentators have found hard to appreciate, his argument is profoundly flawed. In the first place history suggests that it is not often wise for minorities to declare war on majorities or to try to separate themselves off, especially when, as is the case in America, the white majority feels profoundly insecure about its own jobs and prospects. In South Africa, for example, the black leadership took extraordinary pains to ensure their movement did not become a separatist one.

Perhaps more important in the long run is Farrakhan's failure to offer a convincing analysis on gender. His message offers little to the thousands of American black women entrepreneurs, nor to the girls who are doing better in school than their male peers. They may sympathise with the agenda of self-reliance and personal responsibility, and the demand for better behaviour from black men, but they are unlikely to buckle down to traditional and submissive roles. And his gender blindness also means that the opportunity is lost for black men to learn the virtues of self reliance and responsibility from the women in their communities.

Many of these tensions are apparent in Britain, as well. Here, many young black women ask why they need black men at all, if they cannot get jobs and be reliable fathers. Papers such as the *Voice* run stories about the unsuitability of African Caribbean men as partners to their women. Similar trends are apparent in the white community, but the debate becomes particularly acute among a group that is still unsure of its identity.

In Britain Farrakhan's politics has yet to strike many chords, except perhaps in one or two London boroughs. But the style and the themes are likely to reverberate here soon, not least because the underlying causes of disconnection are also evident. This is why we should take note. For Farrakhan is not just emblematic of the new black politics, he is also a mirror of the new white male Christian movements to redefine and shore up masculinity, and the busting apart of the old certainties of race and gender politics.

No gunpowder but plenty of plot

There were amazing scenes yesterday when the Home Secretary, a Mr Michael Howard, claimed that he had absolutely no responsibility for the so-called Gunpowder Plot, in which Guy Fawkes, a Roman Catholic dissident, together with several other of his fundamentalist terrorist brethren, had nearly succeeded in blowing up the Houses of Parliament. Yesterday's debate sought to establish who was to blame for the near-disaster, and all eyes were on Mr Howard as he rose to defend himself.

"I proudly maintain," said Michael Howard Esquire, as he faced his critics, "that in this, as in many other things - nay, in all other things - I am totally blameless. It has always been my policy to safeguard the process of democracy. To protect the throne. To fight for the security of the nation. And to torture anyone who might be a danger to the English."

Amid cries of "Shame!", "Nonsense!", and "All right, Mr Smarmy Pans Esquire, who is to blame, pray?" Mr Howard's voice was heard shouting above the hubbub.

"I tell you, torture works! Torture works! Torture does work! All ye liberal backsliders and ye ill-livered do-gooders, who would fain let the streets of London run free with miscreants and assassins, listen to this!

When a man is tortured so far that he cannot walk nor even rise again, or when he is even dead, then I say unto you: this man will not re-offend! This is the language they understand! Do you think Guy Fawkes will be back on the streets hawking his bombs and explosives again? I think not. You see, hanging, drawing and quartering works!

An Opposition member suggested that Mr Howard might consider the notion of torturing or hanging people before they actually committed any crimes, so that the public could be 100 per cent safe.

"Oh, ye may laugh, sirrah," retorted Howard hotly, "but this is a notion at which we are looking very nearly, and I am in high hopes of opening several establishments where young miscreants may receive a short, sharp shock."

Upon a member inquiring what kind of short, sharp shock, the Home Secretary said it was the kind that was administered by a large axe to the back of the neck. There was much cheering and laughing at this.

"To return to the subject of the motion," said another member, "can the Home Secretary explain how these men came to be in the vaults beneath the Chamber, and who, in the last resort was responsible?" "I, sir, am responsible for the safe arrest of the men," said Mr

Howard, "and for the security arrangements that prevented the disaster. For any shortcomings, I am not responsible."

Amid cries of "Then who is, Old Four-Eyes?", Mr Howard went on:

"As you well know, I have dismissed the head of the Government Torture Service, Mr Lewis, and I consider him responsible for all shortcomings. He should have elicited all this information by torture long before 5 November. Ye buck stoppeth with him."

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that Mr Lewis had repeatedly complained that he was not allowed to continue his normal operations when Mr Howard interrupted at every turn.

"Indeed," he went on, "Mr Lewis has informed us that the Home Secretary was wont to enter the torture sessions unbidden and take a hand with the rack and thumbscrew personally, breaking a bone here,

stretching a sinew there. What has he to tell us on this subject? How can he maintain that he never interfered with operations when it was as clear as the blue on a blackbird's egg that he has persistently meddled with the day-to-day running of the torture service? Was it not time for him to resign?"

"Never!" cried Mr Howard. "I am not a resigning man! It was Mr Lewis's fault! It was Mr Fawkes's fault! It was the fault of the King! But never mine!" Upon someone inquiring how it could be the King's fault, Mr Howard said that Parliament was royal property, and ultimately the responsibility was the monarch's. Maybe God was to blame. Or perhaps the French, with their wicked papist ways. But not him.

"Perhaps we could ask for Mr Lewis himself to appear before the House to explain the way he hath seen things, and to chronicle his part in the events," said the Leader of the Opposition.

"That will not be possible," said Mr Howard, explaining that after his dismissal as head of the Government Torture Service, Mr Lewis had been routinely arrested and tortured in his turn, and was now in no state to testify. He had, however, luckily confessed to blame for the Gunpowder Plot before expiring, and Mr Howard now considered the matter closed.

Howard, "and for the security arrangements that prevented the disaster. For any shortcomings, I am not responsible."

Risks from oral contraception never match the drama of the scare stories, argues Polly Toynbee

The pill is still a girl's best friend

The pill panic is on, again. Yesterday the Committee on Safety of Medicines warned that seven brands of low-dose oral contraceptive carry a greater risk of thrombosis than other types. We have been here before, and no doubt we will be here again. In the darker corners of our cultural undergrowth there lurks a powerful puritanical instinct, eager to believe that the pill is bad for you, it will kill you - in effect, you will die of the promiscuity that the pill precipitated in the Sixties. The Pope said the same about syphilis when it first swept across Europe. Homophobes said it about AIDS in the Eighties: death and disease are the wages of sex.

But there is far more to fear from fear itself. The previous major pill scare in 1983 was followed a few months later by a high peak of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, mainly in the 16 to 29 age group. Pregnant women are still more than twice as likely to get a thrombosis as women



Time to remember: the days when the pill promised unlimited sexual freedom

Photograph: Hufton

The pill gives an increased protection against endometrial and ovarian cancers

who have been taking any of the seven contraceptive pills implicated yesterday.

It was a big panic about thrombosis that led women in 1977 to move from high-dose to such low-dose pills, in the correct belief that they offered a lower risk. Yesterday's report shows that one group of the low-dose pills carries less risk than another. However, the fact is that more women may be put at greater risk of thrombosis as a result of another anti-pill panic. A million and a half women take these seven low-dose pills. Thirty out of every 100,000 of them will get a venous thrombosis - some 450 women in all. But the risk of death from that is exceedingly low, 1 per cent, or four to five women a year.

While this does represent nearly double the risk of other forms of contraceptive pill, and six times that for women not on any oral contraceptive, the pill has other health benefits, less often stressed than its risks. Taking it for even a relatively short period of time gives an increased long-term protection against endometrial and ovarian cancers. The benefits of this protection far outweigh the risks of thrombosis, even of those more dangerous pills listed yesterday. Ovarian cancer is the most common gynaeco-

logical cancer: 6,000 women are diagnosed with it every year and about 4,300 die of it. The pill halves the risk of getting ovarian cancer and this protective effect lasts for 15 years after ceasing to take it.

A quarter of all women of child-bearing age rely on the pill, and the great majority of them are in the younger age groups, who suffer least risk of thrombosis - though it increases if they smoke. Sterilisation is a slightly more popular method of contraception: 12 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men, mainly in their mid-thirties and upwards, choose this more drastic method. Seventeen per cent rely on the condom, 5 per cent on the IUD.

Over the years since the pill was first made widely available, there has been a host of scare stories. Some have been well-founded, based on serious research, as with yesterday's report. The problem is often not with the

research but with the way it is presented, giving women very little chance to assess this minor risk in their lives against other far greater hazards.

But other reports, such as the two studies published in the *Lancet* that set off the 1983 scare, have not been substantiated by later research. Those two linked pill use with breast and cervical cancer. The cervical study has since been more or less dismissed. Conflicting research failed to prove an association with breast cancer, but to be on the safe side the Family Planning Association advises doctors to mention a "possible but unproven connection".

Some pill panics have been trivial, ill-researched firestormers gleaned by headline-hungry newspapers from obscure reports. The trouble with medical scares in the press is that they tend to linger, a vague, unanswered worry rattling about in the back of the mind, never quite refuted or con-

firmed, except perhaps in the small print of specialist medical publications that don't reach the public eye.

How many false alarms can you think of over the years about the causes of cancer, cot-death, schizophrenia or spina bifida which made a splash on the day, but then faded away, unresolved? The mythology of the pill is littered with these shadowy fears and factoids, half-remembered headlines, rumour, gossip, supposition and superstition.

It used to be said knowingly, for instance, that it is not a good idea to stay on the pill for many years without a break. Especially where women started taking it in their teens, the word was that they might risk infertility, the natural rhythm of their bodies would be destroyed for ever. Nature is not mocked, goes the notion, and if you mess with it too violently for too long, it will retaliate.

Not so. That is a theory long since

discredited. The Family Planning Association asserts confidently that for healthy non-smoking women there is no clear reason not to take the pill right up to the menopause.

Every time there is a panic, the use of the pill drops. It reached an all-time high of 29 per cent before the first thrombosis scare and dipped to 22 per cent in the mid-Eighties. It remains, however, the most popular contraceptive method by far among the young, who favour it because it is so easy, and so unproblematic - sex without the awkwardness of revealing premeditated intent. No strings, nothing need be said or done, sex without embarrassment.

But it is precisely this simplicity that worries people. As the *Sunday Telegraph* pronounced during the 1983 scare: "There is no such thing as a free lunch... Mother Nature wants to cool our hot little heels over the pill, ticking us off with a warning that it is not a green light for licence." That

Women are given little chance to assess this minor risk against other hazards

underlying feeling permeates the glee with which the media fall upon anti-pill stories, while conspicuously failing to give front-page headlines to the studies that have shown its beneficial effects.

Women themselves these days tend to fear the pill because it feels unnatural. Gross hormonal interference with the rhythms of the body goes against the grain in an age when people flock to natural remedies, homeopathic medicines, herbal teas and anything labelled "whole" and "organic".

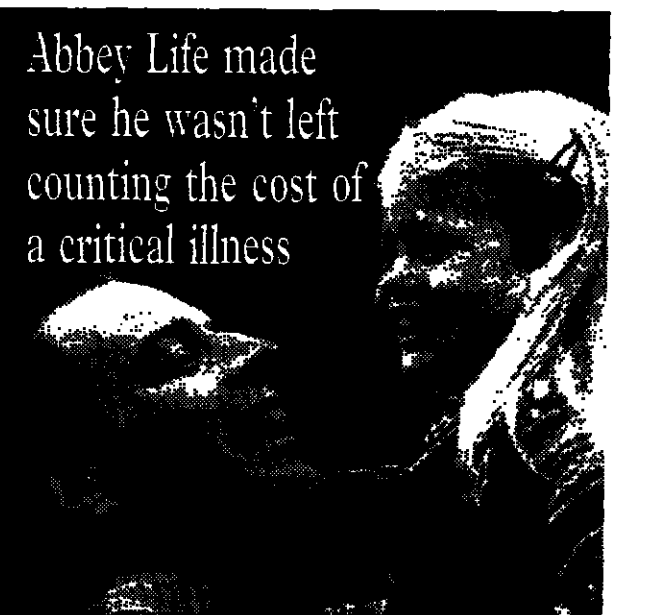
Men have always feared the pill because it gave women their freedom. Nervously, men joked about it and pretended it gave them freedom for unbridled rapacious sex, but in truth it was women's sexuality that was liberated by it. Fear of pregnancy and all the social constructs that entailed kept women in their submissive social place. The Pill is women's best friend, and it is time they learned to overcome their mistrust and love it as they should.

Each new scare deserves to be taken seriously, but it needs to be put into proper perspective. It is quite wrong to think Mother Nature knows best. In matters of women's fertility, she is the enemy.

Generation Why



by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



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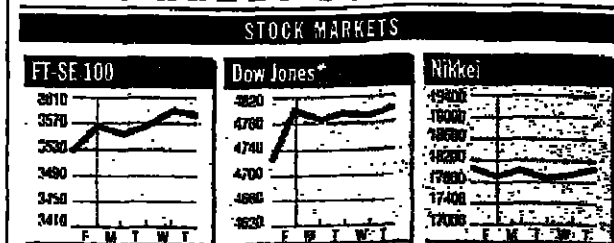
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THE ABBEY LIFE CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER PLAN IS A LIFE ASSURANCE POLICY THE BENEFIT VALUE OF THE PLAN DEPENDS ON THE VALUE OF UNDERWRITING WHICH WHICH CAN GO UP OR DOWN AS WELL AS A VARYING SET OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS. AWARDING OF THE ABBEY LIFE CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER POLICY IS SUBJECT TO A MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND Awaiting Approval. THE ABBEY LIFE CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER POLICY IS A LIFE ASSURANCE POLICY WHICH PROVIDES A SINGLE CASH PAYMENT WHEN YOU SURVIVE 28 DAYS AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF A CRITICAL ILLNESS. THE CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER POLICY IS A LIFE ASSURANCE POLICY WHICH PROVIDES A SINGLE CASH PAYMENT WHEN YOU SURVIVE 28 DAYS AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF A CRITICAL ILLNESS. THE CRITICAL ILLNESS COVER POLICY IS A LIFE ASSURANCE POLICY WHICH PROVIDES A SINGLE CASH PAYMENT WHEN YOU SURVIVE 28 DAYS AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF A CRITICAL ILLNESS.

MARKET SUMMARY



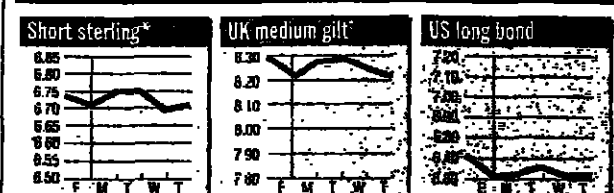
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3578.6	-14.4	-0.4	3593.0	2943.4	3.5
FTSE 250	3098.2	-3.1	-0.1	3091.3	2300.9	3.5
FTSE 350	1779.4	-5.9	-0.3	1785.3	1477.0	3.5
FT All-Share	1965.7	-1.2	-0.1	1983.1	1678.6	3.3
FT All-Share	1757.3	-5.5	-0.3	1757.6	1486.2	3.8
New York	4790.2	+12.6	+0.3	4801.8	3674.6	2.4
Tokyo	17955.4	+98.4	+0.5	19981.8	14485.4	0.8
Hong Kong	9981.6	+7.9	+0.1	10032.9	6967.9	3.2
Frankfurt	2179.6	-15.2	-0.7	2217.0	1811.0	1.9
Paris	1757.3	-13.4	-0.8	1807.3	1721.8	3.8
Milan	9301.0	-97.0	-1.0	10117.0	9238.0	2.1

*New York at 1500 hours. Dow Jones graph at 1300 hours

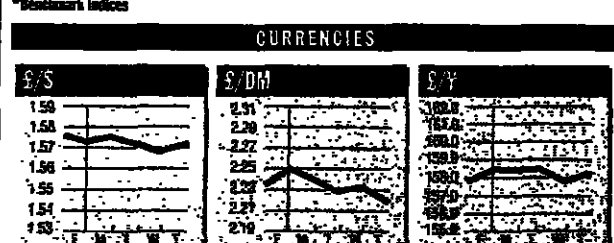
MAIN PRICE CHANGES

FTSE 250 companies (including investment trusts)			
Rises			Falls
	Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change
Polypipe	165	6	3.8
Sainsbury	304	11	3.8
Trafalgar House	21.75	0.75	3.6
M&G Group (Hdg)	1353	45	3.4
Guardian Ry Ex	249	8	3.3
	Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change
Island Group	166	6	3.5
Laird Group	419	15	3.5
Amours	343	10	2.9
Bryant Group	104	3	2.8
Albert Fisher	53	1.5	2.8

INTEREST RATES



*14th December futures contract		*14th December futures contract				
Money Market Rates		Bond Yields *				
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	10 Year	Long Bond	(%) 10 Year
UK	6.63	6.81	8.12	8.80	8.27	8.48
US	5.81	5.81	5.97	7.67	6.32	7.89
Japan	0.25	0.50	2.95	4.62	3.62	5.01
Germany	4.06	4.06	6.53	7.37	7.17	7.80



Pound			Dollar				
	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5713	+0.20	1.6188	£ (London)	0.6364	-0.08	0.6177
\$ (N York)**	1.5742	+0.47	—	£ (N York)	0.6352	-0.19	—
DM (London)	2.2184	-1.44pt	2.4295	DM (London)	1.4125	-0.84pt	1.5008
Yen (London)	158.07	+Y0.20	157.27	Yen (London)	100.59	+Y0.06	97.15
£ Index	83.9	-0.3	88.9	£ Index	92.6	-0.3	93.1

OTHER INDICATORS	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Year Ago	Next Fig.
ON Brent \$	15.84	-0.21	16.48	RPI	150.6	3.9pc	2.4
Gold \$	381.75	-\$2.00	391.00	GDP	2.8pc	4.1	23 Oct
Gold £	242.95	-£1.59	241.54	Base Rates	6.75pc	5.25	-

Source: Datastream

IN BRIEF

Bankers Trust president resigns

Eugene Shanks resigned yesterday as president of Bankers Trust, which has been hit by heavy losses and scandals in its key derivatives business. Frank Newman, until last month part of the Clinton administration, took over as president. The chairman, Charles Sanford, has already announced his retirement for next spring. Several Bankers Trust clients sued last year over losses related to derivatives transactions. Bankers Trust client risk management, which is mostly derivatives trading, made a \$1m profit in the third quarter after losing \$171m in the previous two. Overall third-quarter trading revenue rose to \$257m.

Buffett to sell part of Salomon stake

Legendary US investor Warren Buffett said yesterday he will cash in a portion of his investment in Salomon, the Wall Street investment bank he helped rescue from a Treasury market scandal in the early 1990s. Mr Buffett opted to turn in part of his convertible preferred shares for \$140m cash.

Mowlem chief quits

Mowlem, the construction group which owns London City Airport, announced the resignation of its chief executive, John Marshall, following heavy first half losses. Mr Marshall will leave the company with a pay-off thought to be worth about £200,000. Negotiations continue with two potential buyers for the airport in London's former Royal docks.

Investment column, page 26

Aran falls to £203m Statoil bid

Aran Energy, the Irish oil company, has succumbed to the £203m takeover bid made earlier this week by Statoil, the Norwegian state-owned group. The offer trumped a £182m hostile attack by Arco of the US, which bowed out of the fight.

Rubicon buys Calder for £94m

Rubicon, the precision engineering group, is paying £94m for Calder, the engineering and industrial materials company. The enlarged group will have a market value of £152m and combined sales of more than £250m. Rubicon is raising an additional £15m through the issue of 9 million new shares at a price of 168p. After the deal Rubicon will have five divisions: specialist castings; metal fabrications; magnets; and aluminium alloys.

Vehicle output down

Motor vehicle production fell in September, according to the Central Statistical Office. Total output in the third quarter was 2.9 per cent lower than in the previous year. Home production has fallen 13.3 per cent. Production for export has risen 12.0 per cent over the year, but fell in both August and September. Engineering industry sales rose 2.6 per cent in the three months to August, with the increase dominated by exports. But orders in August itself were 4.2 per cent lower than a year earlier.

Motor Show, page 25

Less work for receivers

The number of companies calling in receivers has fallen to its lowest level since 1989, according to accountancy firm KPMG. There were 416 receiverships in July-September, compared with 508 during the same period a year earlier.

Storm brews over Grid tax treatment

MARY FAGAN
and JEREMY WARNER

A row is brewing over the tax treatment of shares in the £3bn National Grid flotation, with small private shareholders expected to lose out heavily and the big tax-exempt pension funds reaping rich rewards.

The Inland Revenue has determined that the distribution of National Grid shares, details of which are to be announced today, will be treated for tax purposes as a dividend payment. That means that private in-

vestors will have to pay tax on the shares regardless of whether they sell them. By contrast, big City institutions will be able to claim a tax credit from the Exchequer.

The National Grid is owned by the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales. The flotation is to be accomplished by passing these shares pro rata to shareholders in the ReCs.

The tax issue is sure to enrage many private shareholders, who as normal taxpayers will not be able to benefit in the same way

as the big City pension funds.

The flotation of the grid will take the form of allocation of the shares held by the 12 companies to their existing shareholders. The plan was plunged into controversy yet again last weekend after it emerged that electricity executives who have shares and share options in the 12 regional firms stand to make millions of pounds when the grid is floated.

One Whitehall source said the tax issue has nothing to do with the grid sale per se. "It may be regarded as unfair but that

is opening up a different argument over whether the tax benefit is just. It is a general point and has nothing to do with the National Grid," he said.

The flotation of the grid has been dogged by controversy, with government and industry wrangling for months over the details. Last month it was announced that customers would receive a £50 rebate after the flotation in spite of strong opposition from the regional firms.

The £50 rebate, although regarded by ministers as a tri-

umph, was marred by an embarrassing row over "fat cats" in the privatised utilities after grid directors resisted ministerial pressure to waive their share of the special dividends.

David Jefferies, chairman of the National Grid Company, stands to make £190,000 from the dividend payable on his shares while three other directors will get payments of £125,000 between them.

Their decision to take the profit is known to have incensed Tim Eggar, Minister for Energy and Industry, and

also angered executives in some

of the 12 regional firms.

A spokesman for National Grid said that 500 individuals below board level in the company also owned shares and "are legally entitled to the dividend".

Mr Jefferies said recently that he felt "no guilt whatsoever" about his expected gains, adding: "I feel simply that what I choose to do with the money will be my decision."

He said he felt "very strongly" that the freedom of the individual shareholder was at stake.

Crisis management: 30 million shares traded as Keswick brothers come to terms with embarrassing failure

Trafalgar claims full Hongkong support

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Almost 30 million Trafalgar House shares changed hands yesterday, the second day of heavy volumes, as the former Footsie stock became "the best punt in the market" according to one dealer. The shares fell sharply to a low of 17p as the market dismissed an assurance from the company that it retained the support of its largest shareholder, Hongkong Land, but quickly recovered ground as bargain-hunters moved into the market.

Speculation turned to the future of Cunard, the loss-making shipping line that is now Trafalgar's only reasonably well known asset following the disposal two weeks ago of the Ritz hotel for £75m. Analysts warned that a rumoured disposal of the line, which owns the QE2, would achieve nothing if, as expected, it failed to achieve the value at which the business is quoted in Trafalgar's books.

As expected, the troubled shipping, engineering and construction conglomerate responded to a recent flurry of market rumours about its financial viability by issuing a statement confirming the support of Hongkong Land, the Jardine Matheson associate that took a 26 per cent stake in 1992. The statement, thought to have been forced on the company by the Stock Exchange, was intended to stem a stream of selling pressure that has wiped away three-quarters of the value of Trafalgar since the beginning of the year.

Much of the recent speculation has focused on Trafalgar's ability to pay dividends on both its ordinary and convertible preference shares. Yesterday the company confirmed that, al-

though no decisions had been taken, "on the basis of information currently available it is doubtful whether an ordinary dividend will be declared or whether we will make the payments on the cumulative preference shares on 31 December 1995 and 31 January 1996." The profits closed 1.25p lower at 41.75p.

Nigel Rich, chief executive, also warned: "Results for the second half of the year ended 30 September will reflect the continuing poor performance of four businesses for which we reported operating losses at the interim stage. The group's overall operating loss for the second half will be very considerably greater than the first-half operating loss." In June, the company shocked the market with a larger-than-expected loss of £48m for the six months to March.

Mr Rich tried to quell fears that any future rights issue to bolster Trafalgar's shattered balance sheet would not be supported by Hongkong Land. "Hongkong Land has confirmed that it remains a long-term investor and is supportive of the actions management is taking."

Analysts welcomed the company's attempt to clear the air after the feverish speculation that had swirled around the market in recent weeks, but they remained in the dark about the true extent of Trafalgar's problems. Forecasts suggest that a full-year loss of at least £75m will be announced in December but brokers admitted their estimates are largely guesswork.

"How much they lose in 1995 is academic" one said. "What we really want to know is how much they can make afterwards and if the balance sheet can hold until then."

Comment, page 25



At the helm: Henry Keswick (left), and his youngest brother Simon of the Jardine Matheson empire.

Taipans with egg on their faces

No one has come out of the spiralling crisis at Trafalgar House looking particularly clever, but few have as much egg on their face as Simon and Henry Keswick, taipans of the Jardine Matheson trading empire and just about the most powerful Britons in Hong Kong, writes Tom Stevenson.

Their investment in Trafalgar House in 1992, via Jardine's 30 per cent owned subsidiary Hongkong Land, was to have been an insurance policy for the company made famous, in James Clavell's novel of the same name, as the colony's Noble House.

In the run-up to the Chinese takeover of Hong Kong in 1997, Trafalgar was to have been the base for the Keswicks' global business ambitions, a

goal that has proved horribly wide of the mark. It is not the first time the Keswicks have stumbled - although, with an investment of £300m for a 26 per cent stake in a company worth three quarters of that, it has been a particularly embarrassing failure.

Back in the 1960s Henry Keswick was widely credited with failing to take advantage of Hong Kong's rapid expansion into the New Territories. The company then invested in British property just before the early 1970s crash and Jardine rapidly declined in power and wealth.

The group continued to perform poorly under Henry's successor, David Newbagg, when Hongkong Land came close to going bust and

takeover by Chinese entrepreneurs threatened until the clan reassessed control, sacking Newbagg and installing Henry's youngest brother Simon.

Since then, the 1980s economic boom in Hong Kong has allowed the group to prosper, making more money for Jardine and the Keswicks than in the whole of its previous history. Success has come despite the transfer of the group's domicile from Hong Kong to Bermuda in 1984, a move which has been both cause and effect of a deteriorating relationship between Jardine and the Chinese authorities.

Jardine and the Chinese have been conducting a tense stand-off for 160 years now, so Henry Keswick's fabled hatred

of Hong Kong's communist neighbour is nothing new for the company. Founded in 1832 by William Jardine, a Scottish surgeon with a bent for trade, Jardine has a long and not entirely distinguished history.

It bought the first patch of land to be sold on Hong Kong, when the island became a colony in 1842. By then Jardine was heavily involved in the opium trade with China and helped to push Britain into the opium wars of the 1840s to protect its trade. The Chinese have never forgotten.

It is easy to see why Henry and Simon Keswick wanted to loosen the tie with the colony in which their family has prospered for so long. But Trafs was hardly the getaway vehicle they would have chosen.

Economy: Pressure mounts for further reduction in borrowing costs as housing slump claims another corporate victim

Receivers move in at Cornerstone chain

JOHN WILCOCK
Financial Correspondent

The remaining 70 branches of what was once the UK's largest privately owned estate agency, Cornerstone, were put into receivership yesterday with the loss of 250 jobs and emphasising the housing slump.

Cornerstone has already sold off its other 280-odd branches over the last year or so mainly to small independent agencies. Over 200 of those sold still have the Cornerstone name but are unaffected by the receivership and will continue to trade normally.

Cornerstone was the subject of a £7.3m management buy out from Abbey National two years ago by Tony Snarey and Bill McClintock. At that time Cornerstone had 347 offices and 1,800 staff. Abbey lost a total of over £240m on the chain between its launch in 1987 and Abbey's withdrawal from the estate agency market in August 1993.

The latest receivership confirms a trend in which small estate agents have been able to buy back the same offices they sold to large institutions in the 1980s for inflated prices.

Many of the large chains created in the boom such as the 800-strong Prudential Property Services have since disintegrated, being sold back to small firms.

Mr Snarey was understood to be angry about yesterday's receivership, and was particularly critical of Government policy towards the housing sector.

Those offices now in receivership are mainly in the West Country and on the South Coast. Cornerstone was largely supported by the giant Swiss insurer Winterthur Life, which funded the MBO.

The branches will close, although receivers Ernst & Young assured customers that current transactions will continue. Around 40 staff are being kept on in a number of offices to complete the existing workload.

The receivers have said they have already received 100 approaches from potential buyers. Joint receiver Alan Lovett of Ernst & Young said: "One of our first concerns is to promote a point of contact for the Cornerstone customers affected by the receivership."

"A number of offices in the

West Country and on the south coast will remain open to ensure that all current housing transactions and related issues are dealt with efficiently."

Mr Lovett said a communications programme would be put in place to contact customers directly affected.

The receivers said it was "early days" to speculate about whether all the workers would be made redundant; they would be assessing the viability of the 70 branches in the hope of saving as many jobs as possible.

Cornerstone made losses of roughly £20m a year between 1989 and its sale in 1993. Since then housing transactions have fallen by a quarter.

Before moving to Cornerstone Mr Snarey helped Royal Insurance to build up an 800-strong chain in the 1980s, the biggest group in the country. He made a killing by selling his own small chain of offices to Royal, and eventually reinvested the money in the Cornerstone MBO. But by then the housing slump had taken hold and has stubbornly refused to improve.

A customer helpline has been set up, telephone 01734-522432.

Slowdown boosts rate cut hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

There was a modest boost to hopes of a cut in base rates yesterday from figures showing a slowdown in broad money growth and a business survey reporting weaker orders.

The annual rate of growth in M4 fell last month for the first time this year. In the latest published monetary minutes, both Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, had noted that rapid monetary growth was a potential cause for concern.

Row over housing 'recovery'

NIC CICUTTI

A row broke out between mortgage lenders and housing analysts yesterday over whether the housing market remained flat or was beginning to recover. Analysts disputed claims by mortgage lenders that new September lending figures showed the market was still in crisis.

The Building Societies Association said net new commitments, or promises of new loans, slipped to £2.56bn last month from £2.72bn in August. Net lending, which takes

account of loans repaid, fell 18 per cent to £514m from £750m. Adrian Coles, director general of the BSA, said: "The figures continue to present a rather gloomy picture of the housing and mortgage market."

Confirmation of the housing market's fragile state came from new lending figures from the British Bankers' Association, showing property loans stood at £546m in September, down from £597m in August, and £624m a year ago.

Their views were attacked by Ian Shepherdson, economist

at HSBC Greenwell. The most important figures were those for new mortgage commitments. The seasonally adjusted figures stood at 43,000, the highest since February.

"The underlying picture is more buoyant than even these figures show since Cheltenham & Gloucester became a bank in August," he said. "This should have reduced the monthly numbers by about 7,000 yet they have risen."

If we are right then housing activity and prices will rebound strongly in the next few months."

Comment, page 23



"It is quite something when one of the once great names of British industry becomes nothing more than a penny stock punt for the spivier end of the stock market"

Why Jardine is unlikely to pull the plug

It is quite something when Trafalgar House, once one of the great names of British industry, becomes nothing more than a penny stock punt for the spivier end of the stock market. But yesterday's price gyrations in another session of extremely heavy volume confirmed that to be the case.

It is no surprise that cocktail party gossip in the colony's dying days is all about the Kenwick's latest disaster, the collapse of Jardine Matheson's escape tunnel from the Chinese authorities that the so-called Noble House has always failed to appease. There are few places where loss of face stings so harshly.

What is most remarkable is the way that, so far, Henry and Simon Kenwick have survived the loss to Jardine's shareholders of so much of their investment in Trafs. Maybe the bargain hunters that swept the shares off their hands yesterday are right to gamble that the brothers would never dare to crystallise the loss of the £300m they have poured in to the sinking conglomerate since 1992. In the context of a giant trading empire such as Jardine, £300m may not be life-threatening but it is the sort of fouled-up investment that would rightly be the end of many a chief executive.

Clinging on and hoping for the best is unlikely to be a realistic option for Hongkong Land, the subsidiary through which Jardine took the ill-conceived stake. If Trafs is to survive its current deep-seated

problems it must pare down to its contracting and engineering core, selling off Cunard and Ideal, the housebuilder, and inject enough new cash to convince customers the company has a viable future. Jardine must risk throwing good money after bad.

If Trafs were a manufacturing business, the strength of its product might be enough to pull it through. But in engineering and contracting, confidence is all - customers will simply not consider placing orders with a company under a cloud as large and dark as that hanging over Trafalgar.

The other reason Jardine will probably avoid pulling the plug is the doubt doing so would cast on the company's whole strategy. It has got things wrong before, investing in UK property just before the 1970s collapse, for example, but with the imminent arrival of the Chinese in Hong Kong the stakes are immeasurably higher this time round. Not that Hongkong Land's continued support necessarily makes Trafs' battered shares any more attractive. Only when the full extent of the damage to the company's balance sheet is revealed in December will anything but the utmost caution be appropriate.

Thorn music sweeter than CBI presidency

The CBI is still an important and influential organisation but Sir Colin Southgate,

chairman of Thorn EMI, can hardly be blamed for turning down its presidency. Over the next year or two, he is going to have his work more than cut out. Thorn EMI may not yet be in play, but it is pretty close to it. If Sir Colin decides to push ahead with plans to demerge the company's music and TV rental businesses, then it certainly will be. The music side, with its galaxy of stars and copy-right, is one of the three biggest record labels in the world and the only one that it is even remotely possible to buy. As the multi-media revolution gathers pace, it becomes increasingly attractive.

Plainly it makes strategic sense to demerge the TV rental business, which is about as relevant to music as a ten-bob note. From a shareholder value point of view, it also makes commercial sense. TV rental and music are separately quoted companies would almost certainly be worth more than the two companies combined. But from the point of view of keeping the core music business independent and British - which Sir Colin is keen to do - it may make no sense at all. Once stripped of TV rental, the music side becomes even more easy to purchase. There's the conundrum.

And if the purpose of all this is only one of maximising shareholder value, there may be better ways of doing it. One method would be to put the music side up for sale (likely price £5bn plus) and make it subject to a trade auction. Certainly Thorn EMI has

already had approaches along these lines. The proceeds could then be handed back to shareholders by way of special dividend, allowing gross funds to claim a thumping great tax credit on top.

There is, however, one way in which the trick of both demerging and remaining independent might be accomplished. This would be to accompany the demerger with the acquisition by the music side of a more appropriate business - say in publishing. If that is what Sir Colin has in mind, it is no wonder he hasn't got time for the CBI.

Clarke wrestles with housing conundrum

Kenneth Clarke today meets with his Treasury team at the country get-away of Dorneywood with fresh calls for action to help the housing market ringing in his ears.

At first blush, the latest dispatch from the battlefront of Arcadia Avenue could hardly be gloomier. Cornerstone, the rump of what was once the country's largest privately owned estate agency chain, went bust yesterday. Meanwhile, building societies said that their net lending had fallen by one-fifth in September. Banks also reported a decline in their mortgage lending - this in the last month before the new mortgage insurance provisions came into effect.

in their lobbying for help in the Budget. The favoured tax break is now the removal of stamp duty, which at around £500m on residential property would at least have the merit of not costing an arm and a leg. But even if the Chancellor were not in the tight fiscal corner that he finds himself, he might think twice before granting the building societies their wish. There are signs that the housing market may already be recovering from this year's renewed slump.

Earlier this month, the Bank of England published figures showing a big jump in the number of loans approved in August by banks and building societies. In fact they reached their highest level so far this year. We now know that building societies increased their loan approvals in September, too.

Not all loan approvals translate into actual purchases, but they at least indicate whether people are seriously looking for houses. In a few days' time we'll know whether banks also stepped up their loan approvals in September. If this is so, it would show that August was not just a freak month and that the housing market might be poised for revival.

With so little money to spare, Kenneth Clarke is likely to cross his fingers and hope that the housing market is set to recover of its own accord. If he gets it wrong, he won't be the first Chancellor to be misled by the green shoots of recovery.

Nadir's sister sues for £5m damages

DAVID HELLIER and JOHN WILCOCK

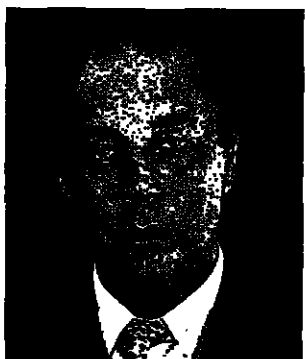
The sister of Asil Nadir, the founder of Polly Peck, is to take the Serious Fraud Office to court for wrongful dismissal and false imprisonment. Bilge Navzat will claim £5m damages.

In a separate development it emerged yesterday that Mr Nadir is hoping to instruct Geoffrey Robertson QC, the barrister best known for his defence in the Matrix Churchill trial, to prepare a case to have the criminal proceedings against him dropped.

Mr Nadir was made personally bankrupt following the collapse of his £2bn Polly Peck business empire in 1990. The SFO subsequently brought fraud and theft charges against him totalling £30m. In 1993 he fled to northern Cyprus, which has no extradition treaties with the UK and where the tyrannical government support.

The SFO has stressed since Mr Nadir's flight that the charges still stand and they are ready to hold a trial if or when he returns to the UK.

Mr Nadir will argue that



Asil Nadir: 'In tireless pursuit of his innocence'

there has been an abuse of due process. He will say that privileged documents have been opened and circulated and that there has been so much adverse publicity it makes it impossible for him to stand a fair trial.

Mrs Navzat issued writs yesterday in the High Court against the Serious Fraud Office and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner. She was arrested in connection with allegations - later withdrawn - that she was involved in a plot to bribe Mr Justice Tucker, the judge handling her brother's trial. The

SFO said yesterday it would be defending her writ.

Peter Krivinkas, Mrs Navzat's solicitor, said that his client was living in northern Cyprus and had been suffering depression since her arrest.

Mr Krivinkas, who also represents Mr Nadir, said the Polly Peck founder "is working tirelessly with a view to establishing his innocence. When the criminal case has been thrown out, he will claim compensation."

The SFO is scheduled to go to court next month for a preliminary hearing against Elizabeth Forsyth, Asil Nadir's former business colleague at Polly Peck. She returned to the UK following Mr Nadir's flight in 1993 to provide evidence to the SFO. She is being charged on two counts of handling stolen goods.

This month Chris Barker, a co-administrator from accountants Coopers & Lybrand, held "peace talks" with Mr Nadir. He said on Wednesday that the talks had been "frank and useful. We are keeping the link (to Mr Nadir) open."

Speculation grows over Leeson trial deal

JOHN EISENHAMMER Financial Editor

Nick Leeson's lawyer in Singapore, John Koh, met fraud investigators there amid mounting speculation yesterday that the former trader is seeking a deal. Mr Koh refused to discuss details of his discussions with the Commercial Affairs Department, the investigation arm of the Finance Ministry, but said: "We have been evaluating all the various defence options open to us."

The CAD has launched a full-scale investigation into a number of former top Barings executives accused of covering-up a key warning sign that might have prevented the collapse of the merchant bank.

The CAD has interviewed James Bax and Simon Jones, formerly the two most senior Barings executives in Singapore, and is keen to talk to Peter Norris, the London-based former chief executive. In a damning report by the Singa-

pore authorities into the demise of Barings, both Mr Norris and Mr Bax were accused of involvement in the cover-up and of lying to the investigators. Lawrence Ang, director of the CAD, opened the door to a deal with Mr Leeson during his announcement on Wednesday that the investigation is to be widened to a handful of other executives. "We will see what he has to offer," he said. Mr Leeson appears to be increasingly resigned to facing trial in Singapore, although

he has appealed against the decision of a German court to approve his extradition. After the Singapore authorities' report earlier this week, which broadened the blame for the bank's demise to, notably, Mr Norris and Mr Bax, the British lawyer representing Mr Leeson, Stephen Pollard, said his client is now likely to get a fairer hearing in Singapore. Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday declared the Singapore

findings on Barings to be consistent with the Bank's own inquiry, while admitting he had not read the report. Mr George, speaking in Kuala Lumpur, during a goodwill tour of Asian financial centres - Singapore is not on the itinerary, said: "Based on press accounts I can say that it is consistent with our findings." Both had identified a single trader's unauthorised dealings and a failure of management controls as the main reasons for the Barings collapse.

Yorkshire unveils £180m payout

MARY FAGAN Industrial Correspondent

Yorkshire Electricity is to pay a £1 special dividend at a cost of more than £180m and will consolidate its share capital in January 1996. The company also promised to distribute "most" of its 9.2 per cent stake in the National Grid Company to shareholders when the grid is floated at the end of the year.

The dividend, which falls short of a £300m payout expected by some City analysts, will leave the company with a ratio of borrowing to shareholders' funds of 75 per cent. Malcolm Chatwin, chief executive, rejected the suggestion that the dividend is a pre-emptive move to fend off a potential bid for the group. "This is really just implementing the strategy we have already indicated, which is to return value to shareholders. This takes us as far as we want to go at the current time," he said.

Yorkshire also said it plans ordinary dividend increases of 10 per cent this year and next compared with annual increases of about 15 per cent over the last few years. The company attributed recent improvements to better cost control in its electricity distribution and supply operations and said that further efficiency gains are in train.

City analysts have focused on Yorkshire Electricity in recent weeks as one of the next targets for a takeover bid, but the company declines to comment on whether it has received an approach. Mr Chatwin said: "Our position is that we can go forward successfully as an independent company." But he added that the board would examine any proposal that would enhance shareholder value.

The sector is awaiting the next move of Houston Industries, which as part of Texas Energy bid unsuccessfully for Norweb.

Rises in executive pay begin to slow

PETER RODGERS Business Editor

The row over British Gas pay and the Greenbury report have helped to moderate pay rises at the top of British industry, according to a survey by Bacon & Woodrow, the actuaries.

Chief executive salary increases have slipped back compared with a year ago, but there has been less impact from the furor on the pay rises of other board members.

Keith McNeish, introducing the survey, said: "The Cedric Brown effect - the pressure on senior executives pay - has embarrassed companies a little in terms of their most highly paid individual."

He believed that all the talk about telephone number salaries was persuading remuneration committees to say: "Let's peg the man at the top," even if they had to carry on paying the rest of the board above the rates of other people.

The survey also found a "spectacular" increase in the number of people expecting to retire at 60 rather than later. This has risen from 55 per cent

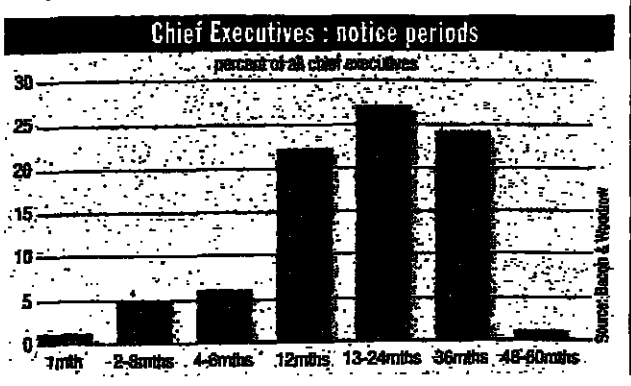
to 77 per cent. Mr McNeish said it would be interesting to know whether this reflected the fact that people found the heat of the kitchen too strong and wanted to get out.

The survey found total board salary packages among 731 people at 102 companies, including benefits and bonuses, rose 8 per cent, but those of chief executives rose only 5.6 per cent. This narrow differential was the most significant finding of the survey.

The average main board director now receives a basic salary of £123,470 with benefits

and bonuses taking the total to £212,556. Chief executives' average basic salary is £228,738 with a total remuneration package averaging £399,318.

Bacon & Woodrow found 27 per cent of top executives had received no merit increase on basic salary and the average increase was 5 per cent - compared with 7 per cent last year. However, 20 of the sample received more than 20 per cent and another 17 between 15 and 20 per cent. Last year the comparable figures were 30 and 42, suggesting a moderation of the extreme increases.



CBI warns on capital spending

PAUL WALLACE Economics Editor

As the Chancellor and his Treasury team gather at Dorneywood today for a key budget strategy meeting, business leaders have warned Kenneth Clarke not to axe capital projects to pay for tax cuts.

"We are worried about a strategy for the budget which involves significant cuts in capital expenditure to pay for tax cuts," said Adam Turner, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry. "The government has to be very careful of action that is in danger of causing a major setback in the construction industry."

"The danger is that once again they will mortgage the future to pay for short-term tax cuts," said Sir John Banham, chairman of Iarnac and a former CBI director-general.

A particular concern is that the government may slash capital spending programmes under the guise of a further expansion of the Private Finance Initiative. The PFI, which was launched in 1992, aims to get the private sector to finance capital projects which were formerly undertaken only by government.

The CBI is in favour of the PFI, but Mr Turner said that "we are very wary about the argument that the PFI can fill the gap because our members tell us there are teething problems." He added that "there was a worry about counting chickens before they're hatched."

Progress with the PFI has been modest to date, with only £500m invested up till the end of the last financial year, 1994/5. The government has said, however, that it expects to let contracts this year leading to around £5bn of capital investment, of which nearly £3bn is the channel tunnel rail link.

According to Douglas Hogg, chief executive of the Private Finance Panel - set up in 1994 after criticism of the scheme's lack of progress - the PFI has achieved considerable momentum. He pointed to over 500 projects in the pipeline for the health service worth £2bn. But few of these schemes have yet produced any actual expenditure - only £100m of capital spending has resulted in the health service so far.

CBI members say that there is a gap in capital expenditure before the PFI "kicks in." And one City financier involved in the schemes said that the Treasury is cutting back on public investment before projects funded through the scheme actually materialise. Gross public investment is already projected to fall by 10 per cent next year from its level in 1994/5.

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The new shadow trade minister believes she can allay worries about Labour's policies. She talked to **Peter Rodgers**

Beckett prepares to calm industry's fears

Margaret Beckett, the new shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, plans to campaign to allay the fears of industrialists that Labour's business-friendly new policies may not be delivered when the party is in power.

Speaking last night as her new job was confirmed, she said: "It is part of my role to seek to allay peoples' fears if we can, and to reassure them if we can, that we are all very mindful of the needs of wealth creation and the vital importance of business and industry to our national well-being."

Mrs Beckett, who has had considerable experience of talking to business and the City as a member of the late John Smith's Treasury team before the last election, said she would do everything possible to "build up contacts and air and share concerns with industry". With Mr Smith, she was one of the principal members of the famous "prawn cocktail circuit" that tried to neutralise any opposition from the financial and business community to a Labour government.

On Wednesday, Sir Bryan Nicholson, president of the Confederation of British Industry, repeated his previous welcome of the big shift in Labour policy towards a more business friendly outlook. The CBI also gave a welcome to Labour's macro-economic policy. But Sir Bryan said there were still fears among industrialists that once in power a Labour government would not be able to deliver on its new policies.

Mrs Beckett called on industrialists to be open-minded this time round. She said: "Before the last general election a great many things were saying were not at all dissimilar to what the CBI was saying, yet Sir John Banham (then director general of the CBI) went out of

his way to slag off the Labour party and was saying the CBI wouldn't have anything to do with it."

Mrs Beckett, who declined to comment on specific policies after only minutes in her new position, said: "I always thought it quite astonishing and very disarming that government ministers would really tear into business representatives for their views and it was always swallowed."

She warned industrialists that it would get still worse under a renewed Tory mandate. "Were the Conservatives to be re-elected for a fifth term they really would believe that they could do anything they liked and wouldn't listen to anybody at all about anything - and that would include people in industry and commerce."

Mrs Beckett, who is moving from the health portfolio, said she had always found industrial policy fascinating. Her first job had been as an engineering apprentice at Metropolitan Vickers in Trafford Park, Manchester - a company later taken over by AEI which was in turn absorbed in the present GEC. She became a metallurgist.

Her first Labour party staff job was at headquarters working on industrial policy. Ever since then she had taken an interest in industry. "I have always had a constituency (Derby South) with very strong manufacturing industry interests. I have always tried to create and preserve good relations between the party and industrialists."

She added jokingly: "Some of my best friends are industrialists, as they say," and said she had played a minor role in setting up the Labour Industry Forum, which has been working with business people to develop detailed policies for the



Trade entrance: Margaret Beckett called on industrialists to be open-minded and not to "slag off the Labour Party"

Photograph: Brian Harris

party. But Mrs Beckett thought it impolitic to name the industrialists in the forum with whom she was friends.

Under her predecessor, Dr Jack Cunningham, the Labour industry team has worked at a wide range of policies on issues from competition policy to reg-

ulation and the utilities, but it has been overshadowed on the executive pay row by Gordon Brown, the Opposition Treasury spokesman.

Mr Brown has at times appeared to make all the running on the "fat cat" issue, sidelining Dr Cunningham, though pay

risks are mainly to do with corporate governance and other issues that belong to the trade side.

Mrs Beckett refused to be drawn into how she would share out these high profile issues - which attract a lot of personal publicity - with Mr Brown, but

dropped hints that she would become more involved.

She said she and Mr Brown would work together on the issues.

"Gordon has very effectively used the issue of what is happening in the utilities to highlight the issue of fairness -

and fairness is the key to our taxation policies."

Mrs Beckett added: "These things change and evolve. I see things change and evolve."

She looked forward to working with Mr Brown. "What we will do is to try to divide up the work and the exposure in ways that are most effective for the policies."

Mrs Beckett did not want to lay down any rules about who did what, and believed in working it out as it went along.

She believed she would be fighting a government that had to a considerable extent run out of ideas and steam, which explained why some of the newer developments in policy towards business were also ideas prominent in Labour thinking.

Observers believe that areas of partial overlap - and possible continuity between a Labour and Tory government - include policies for small business and proposals such as the Business Links network developed by Michael Heseltine, which Labour is more likely to develop and expand than cut back.

Asked whether she believed there were areas of possible continuity in policy towards business after a change of government, Mrs Beckett said: "One of the sad things about the policy debate today is that the attitude of the present government is so utterly infantile - it will never accept that there can be any common ground or common sense."

She was enthusiastic about taking charge of science and technology - a new part of the industry portfolio - and also declared her enthusiasm for consumer issues. "I think that has a great deal of importance that is often overlooked. We have a very good team in that area with a keen eye for what is in the interests of consumers. For a long time in the public and private sectors we haven't looked as fully at the interests of consumers as we should have done."

When she moved to the health portfolio, her predecessor left her 36 crates of material to digest. She will shortly meet Dr Cunningham for the trade and industry handover.

Thorn in bid spotlight after chairman refuses CBI role

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The decision by Thorn EMI chairman Sir Colin Southgate not to take up the presidency of the Confederation of British Industry has again put the music to consumer rental group in the bid spotlight. Sir Colin cited for his decision pressure of work in preparing for the planned break-up of the business.

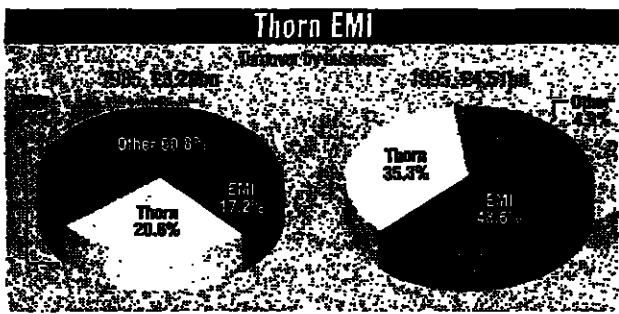
On the face of it, demerging the various parts of Thorn EMI should not present the chairman with too onerous a task. There is precious little business connection binding together recording and publishing stars like Frank Sinatra and the pop group Smashing Pumpkins, with rented furniture and television.

Where the headaches do lie is in unscrambling the legal details of 22 holding companies operating in 40 countries and a potentially hefty tax bill, which is likely to have come down from last year's estimates of £150m but could still be substantial.

The prize for shareholders is likely to be worth both the extra tax and the hard work to be put in by Sir Colin and his fellow directors if they do decide

to go with a demerger "early next year". Since the beginning of the year, the share price has outperformed the rest of the stock market by 28 per cent as break-up bid speculation has gathered pace. At £15.54, up 5p yesterday, the shares stand just below their all-time high. Yet many analysts believe that is just the starting point for the sort of value that could be unlocked by the separation of the parts of the group.

The jewel in Thorn EMI's crown is undoubtedly the EMI music business, now probably the third-largest in the world behind Time Warner of the US and PolyGram, controlled by the Dutch electronics giant Philips. The deal which catapulted the group into the top ranks of the music industry was the £510m acquisition of Virgin Music in 1992, bringing together blockbuster groups like the Rolling Stones, Genesis and UB40 with the likes of Tina Turner and the Pet Shop Boys. Virgin rapidly proved its worth, chipping in record profits of £90m in 1993-94, the last year it was reported separately. But EMI also possesses a massive cash cow in the shape of its ownership of copyrights to



well over 800,000 music titles. Any break-up of the group could set off a massive auction for the EMI business, given its position as the only one of the big five groups not owned or controlled by a big group. But the Thorn rental business, which has tended to be overshadowed by the music side, could also prove attractive to bidders. Its rather dowdy image is being transformed by a move towards "rent to buy", opening up a relatively painless way for the less well-off to own sought-after consumer durables.

Based on traditional multiples of sale, cash flow and earnings, Paul Slatery at brokers Kleinwort Benson puts a value on £50m on EMI alone, with another £20m or so for Thorn and perhaps £350m for the HMV and Dillons record and bookshop chains. Together, that adds up to £17 a share for the group as currently constituted, but in a bidding war "it would not be stupid if we saw an end price of £23", he says.

The only fly in the ointment is whether EMI's recording artists would be keen to sign up to likely bidders, which include Viacom, the third-largest music retailer in the US, Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG, Walt Disney and News International. Many recording stars have contracts that allow them to

walk away on a change of ownership, which could substantially reduce the value of EMI unless some notoriously fragile egos are handled carefully.

But Sir Colin and Jim Fifield, head of EMI, have a personal interest in ensuring that any such moves do not get in the way of securing the best possible price in any auction for the group. At £20 a share, Sir Colin would net close to £6.5m from his share options, while Mr Fifield could pocket £3.8m on top of total emoluments last year of £7.5m.

In certain circumstances he could also pick up a further 800,000 shares in six years time, worth £16m at £20 a share. Comment, page 23



Sir Colin Southgate: to concentrate on demerger

Tax break to change cars rejected

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday disappointed the motor industry by rejecting calls for tax incentives to boost the sale of new cars.

Leading executives had asked the Government to introduce a so-called scrappage subsidy, to encourage motorists to trade in old cars for new ones, in next month's Budget. But Mr Lang, whose Motor Show press conference was abandoned in disarray after protests by anti-car demonstrators, said: "There is no intention to start a scrappage subsidy."

His comment is the clearest statement yet of the Government's position after the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders submitted proposals for a subsidy to the Chancellor



last month. One car executive said yesterday: "If Mr Lang can't see the sense of a subsidy, then no one in the Government is going to push it through."

A scrappage tax in France has boosted sales by an estimated 240,000 and has also been suc-

cessful in Spain. Ian McAllister, chairman of Ford UK, has been a strong supporter of a subsidy for scrapping cars aged 10 years or older, saying this week that it would improve the environment if more old cars were taken off the road.

The RAC estimates that the number of cars on the road that were more than 10 years old rose to 7.4 million last year from 4.9 million in 1986 because the recession had suppressed consumer demand. Richard Parham, managing director of Peugeot UK has proposed a graded subsidy of between £500 and £800 depending on the size of new car bought.

Not everyone in the industry was concerned by Mr Lang's comments. Charlie Golden, managing director of Vauxhall, believes a subsidy would be a

short-term gimmick. And John Towers, chief executive of Rover, said: "If the industry sells on just one point of advantage - price - then we are wasting our time."

Meanwhile Alex Trotman, chairman and chief executive of Ford, warned of the threat posed by South Korean car manufacturers. With companies like Daewoo making significant inroads in Europe, Mr Trotman described the country as the new Japan.

He said that 500,000 cars were exported from South Korea to Europe last year, but the target was to reach 500,000 by the end of the decade. This new "hyper competition" would be "far tougher than anything anyone has experienced in the past, here in Britain, in the US, or wherever."

Kevin believed shares belonged to RMG

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Kevin Maxwell told yesterday of the last face-to-face conversation with his father Robert before the mysterious plunge to his death from his luxury yacht four years ago. The wide-ranging conversation took place the day before the publisher set off for a short break on his boat at the end of October 1991.

Kevin told an Old Bailey jury on his fourth day of giving evidence that his father was still suffering from a chest infection, which he hoped to throw off before flying on to Israel for business meetings. During their talk Robert Maxwell told Kevin he had transferred the beneficial ownership of £22m of shares in the Israeli pharmaceutical concern Teva from BIM (Bishopsgate Investment Management, which administered the pension funds) to the Robert Maxwell Group.



Day 81

His father had done exactly the same thing earlier that year with £100m worth of shares with another Israeli company, Scitex, before they were successfully sold at a handsome profit.

His father had shown him stock transfer forms for the Teva shares. He saw a "substantial benefit" if the shares were offered as belonging to the RMG rather than BIM, "particularly because of the positive PR that would accrue to the group from another successful sale of Israeli assets at a profit".

Robert Maxwell told his son he would arrange for the re-registration of the Teva shares in RMG's name. Kevin said he believed his father and thought the shares now belonged to RMG.

Asked by his counsel, Alan Jones QC, why he thought that, Kevin Maxwell said: "The only explanation I can give is simply years of working with him. In my whole cumulative experience of doing business with him, if he said something he meant it and I relied on what he said to me."

He was not concerned about the paperwork because frequently with his father's dealings the paperwork followed later, sometimes much later. That was the last face-to-face meeting Kevin Maxwell had with his father. But he spoke to him on the boat and at one stage his father had wanted him to fly out and join him for a business meeting. But in the end they resolved this over the telephone. He had expected his father

back in England for a dinner of the Anglo-Israeli Association where he was a guest of honour and due to speak. But in a phone call from the boat his father explained that he had still not shaken off his cold, had cancelled the trip to Israel but would be back in time for an important business meeting he and Kevin Maxwell were due to have with the chief executive of Lloyds Bank.

Kevin Maxwell, his brother Ian and former Maxwell financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg all deny conspiracy to defraud the pension fund by misusing the Teva shares and pledging them as security for a loan.

Kevin Maxwell alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his late father to misuse the Teva shares to pay private Maxwell company debts. The prosecution alleges in both cases that the shares did not belong to RMG but the pension fund. The trial continues today.

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business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Good news at last from Fisher

Albert Fisher has brought few good tidings in recent years but yesterday's results finally had the look of better news about them. Stripping out exceptional disposals, pre-tax profits for the year to August, up 15 per cent to £39.5m, gave some cause for optimism.

Management, led by chief executive Stephen Walls, is now sounding pretty bullish and investors must hope that three years of restructuring and under-performance is about to turn into a phase of sustained growth.

Albert Fisher certainly needs one after a period of drift during which the shares have fallen a long way from their most recent peak of 130p in 1991. Yesterday they finished 1.5p lower at 53p.

Like most food groups, Fisher has been subjected to the twin squeeze of the powerful supermarkets and rising raw material costs. It has responded by moving away from commodity products towards added-value ranges in an attempt to protect itself from the worst of the pinch.

Commodity products now account for 35 per cent of group sales compared with 65 per cent three years ago and Mr Walls expects that figure to fall steadily. The hope is that Albert Fisher will become less prone to natural disasters such as the hurricanes and floods that have regularly pulled the rug from underneath the company.

Added-value items such as prepared meals and sauces represent 20 per cent of the American division, though it is a moot point whether washing and chopping lettuce before putting it in a bag really qualifies. Certainly the US was the star performer last year, with profits jumping from £6.4m to £16.9m. But this was flattered by strong lettuce prices, which added around £2m to the profit figures.

The seafood sector was more disappointing but the division is now under new management and a recovery is expected this year. There should also be further growth in the sauces and dressings business, where a new factory is being built to cope with additional demand from customers like McDonalds, Sainsbury and Waitrose.

Mr Walls says Fisher is now down to its core businesses and no further disposals are expected. In-fill acquisitions are, however, on the agenda.

Management must now fulfil the upbeat promises it has made and although the shares offer a good yield, the company is still relatively exposed to com-

modity areas. BZW is forecasting profits of £42m for the current year, putting the shares on a forward rating of 12. About right.

Mowlem move shrugged off

The market has become so blasé about the travails of the construction sector, and especially of J Mowlem, one of its more troubled constituents, that it pretty much shrugged off the departure yesterday of the company's chief executive, John Marshall. The shares lost just 3p to 58p, although that puts them within a whisker of their recent low, hit in August 1992, and means they have lost almost 90 per cent of their value since they peaked in 1989.

After the announcement a month ago that the company had plunged into a £31.8m loss, mainly thanks to the heavy costs of refocusing itself on a profitable core, it was perhaps no surprise that senior heads would roll. Ken Minton, chairman since the summer, has clear views about where he should take Mowlem and his ideas plainly did

not chime with Mr Marshall's. His replacement is the group's construction head, who will have an intimate knowledge of one of the four areas the company has decided to focus on.

Whether the shares, after their recent dismal performance, are worth looking at again is hard to say. On the positive side, Mr Minton's strategy seems to make sense – stripping out the businesses, such as London City Airport, which cannot pay their way, reducing overheads to match the low level of business available and focusing on activities where a decent return is achievable.

But following the worse-than-expected red ink in September, analysts have become a great deal more circumspect about their forecasts and, even after the recent fall, the shares do not appear unduly cheap on earnings grounds.

Smith New Court has pencilled in profits of £4.5m for the current year to December, disregarding the exceptional restructuring write-off that smashed a hole in first-half figures and will do so again at the full-year stage. Next year, £5.5m could be achievable, implying earnings per share of 4.1p and

a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14. That is hardly compelling, especially as the shares, on the basis of a promised 2p final dividend, yield only 4.3 per cent, close to the market average. Given all the uncertainty, the shares are unlikely to reverse recent weakness.

New radio group tunes in to AIM

Independent Radio is giving a shot in the arm to the fledgling Alternative Investment Market by raising £9.7m in a mainly institutional placing. It is a large sum for a start-up, representing almost double the next biggest cash raising on AIM, and nearly a quarter of the £40.3m total garnered in new cash by the market to date. But Independent's executive management, led by Michael Connolly, has a strong track record in the business, having successfully turned round the Preston-based Trans World Communications radio group before selling it last year to EMAP for £71m.

The money now being raised by Independent represents seed-corn finance for a predatory venture hoping to scoop up small radio stations which have won licences to operate in the north of England. The group has identified 30 such outfits which may be willing to sell out, particularly where initial investors backed start-ups to take advantage of the Business Expansion Scheme tax breaks and are now looking for a way out.

Prices vary, but for a typical outlay of £1m, Mr Connolly thinks they can secure an audience of up to 800,000 a time. The second strand of the strategy is to attempt to win the licences for Yorkshire and East Midlands, the two largest franchises to be allocated by the Radio Authority next year. Success would involve expenditure on studios and other infrastructure and the intention would be to return to shareholders for the cash.

The potential is undoubtedly there, given the rapid growth in commercial radio advertising. The strength of Independent's management gives it a decent chance to exploit that potential, as yesterday's 17p closing premium to the 100p placing price recognises. But given the risks with any start-up, the shares should not be chased.

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Warning: Black holes can damage your eyes

Asli Nadir's claim that the only reason he had dark rings under his eyes was because he was a workaholic can at last be officially challenged. Richard Stone, the court-appointed administrator who led the initial investigation into the finances of Polly Peck International, has been talking of the early days before the discovery of "the black hole".

When the administrator first met Mr Nadir in the Polly Peck offices above Annabel's he asked the tycoon if he asked peepers were in any way influenced by the proximity of the nightclub. No, Mr Nadir assured, it was all down to hard work. Mr Stone says he believed him. Until he discovered the Cypriot's five mistresses on the Polly Peck books.

Meanwhile, the long-suffering Chris Barlow, co-administrator of Polly Peck, is looking decidedly perkier after returning from his peace talks with the fugitive businessman without a bullet in his backside.

Mindful of the treatment meted out to British accountants in northern Cyprus in the past, Mr Barlow wrote to the government demanding full and proper protection. He was duly met at the airport by squads of police who took him to Mr Nadir's hotel. Once there he was crushed into a tiny lift with two colleagues and a sweating bodyguard. Barely had it started than the lift broke down.

Although he confessed to not having actually read it, Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, yesterday appeared comforted that the Singapore report on the collapse of Barings had reached the same conclusion as his own – ie Nick Leeson was a rogue who lost £1bn.

Oddly this is not a view shared within Barings itself where they are keen to put



Julian Richer (above), hi-fi retailer turned trendy management consultant, has taken a sudden turn into the second-hand car trade. The man who galvanised the Asda workforce by persuading his pal Archie Norman to introduce the "drive a Jaguar for a month" incentive programme has opened a Mercedes outlet in Leeds.

Mr Richer became famous by rewarding loyal staff at his hi-fi chain, Richer Sounds, by lending them his Rolls-Royce for a month. The company quickly entered the Guinness Book of Records in the highest-turnover-per-square-foot category and left the founder free to preach staff motivation techniques to big business. The secondhand car shop, called Julian's, will buy and sell prestige Mercedes. "We've got very good vibes about this one," said a spokesman.

the record straight. "Nick Leeson lost about £50m," breathes a senior source. "The other £950m was lost by the bank's management."

After extensive research on economists' salaries the Society of Business Economists has interpreted the data to mean that they could do with some more money. Being economists they didn't put it quite so succinctly.

"While the median pay level has grown slightly faster than average earnings, at times the real value of economists' salaries has fallen," says their report.

What this means is that the large salary rises in the 1980s have not been repeated in the 90s – "a difficult time for

many middle-class professionals but particularly for those paid to forecast the depth and extent of the 80s downturn as accurately as possible."

Quite. But the "median" salary of SBE members is still £42,500, compared with an inflation-adjusted £20,000 in 1964. The problem is that economists hit their peak earning years in their early thirties.

Sir Phil Harris, carpet king, South London boy made good and the only remaining Tory party donor, likes to stick to his roots. Among the impressive list of City advisers listed in the Carpetright annual report are the bankers – National Westminster (Tooting).

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Visually the car is stunning, the curvaceous lines

set off by unique five-spoke alloy wheels. The light weight and aerodynamic shape makes the Elise a "green" machine, cutting down on fuel consumption and thus carbon dioxide emissions.

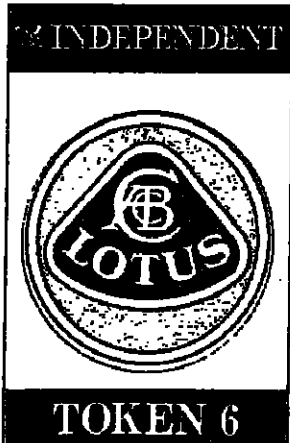
The 1795cc 4-cylinder fuel-injected engine delivers a top speed of around 120mph and the Elise, worth approximately £20,000, comes with catalytic converter, engine immobiliser, cloth trim and black vinyl hood.

Lotus are exhibiting the Elise at this month's Motor Show at London's Earls Court and to make it easier to view our prize car, there is a voucher on this page that gives £2 off the normal entry price of £9.

As well as receiving the keys to a Lotus Elise, our competition winner will

also get one year's free insurance provided by Norwich Union Club Insurance. This service offers a 24-hour Clubline which, should you have an accident, connects you to a dedicated Club Incident Manager who will take immediate care of the problem.

To be in with a chance of winning our prize you must collect six differently numbered tokens from the 14 we are printing in the Independent and the Independent on Sunday. At least one token must come from the Independent on Sunday. Today we are printing Token 6 and the entry form. We will print an entry form at the end of the competition. Rules as previously published.



TOKEN 6

THE INDEPENDENT

£2 off Adult Entry or £1 off Child/Senior Citizen Entry to the London Motor Show. This voucher entitles one person to the above discount for one day at the London Motor Show (Earls Court Exhibition Centre). Please present this voucher at the ticket office. Valid 20-29

THE LONDON
MOTOR
SHOW
EARLS COURT
19TH - 29TH
OCTOBER 1995

For further details on Norwich Union's Club Insurance call 0800 628647 for an information pack



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AUTOSPORT

CLASSIC

INDEPENDENT/LOTUS ELISE ENTRY FORM

Send your completed entry form, along with 6 differently numbered tokens (including one from the Independent on Sunday), to:
Independent/Lotus Elise Prize Draw, PO Box 203, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TY.
Closing date is 17 November 1995.

SECTION 1

TITLE: (tick as appropriate)
Mr ☐ 1 Mrs ☐ 2 Miss ☐ 3 Ms ☐ 4 Other ☐ 5
Surname(s):
Address:
Town:
County:
Postcode:
Home telephone no:

AGE: (tick as appropriate)
18-20 ☐ 21-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+ ☐

SECTION 2

It would help The Independent if you could tell us about any newspaper you or your partner buy, by ticking the appropriate boxes below for both your Daily and Sunday purchases. Put a tick against papers you have delivered in the columns 'Delivered at Home'. For papers you buy yourself, please indicate how often you buy by ticking against the relevant papers in either the 'Bought most days' or 'Bought occasionally' columns.

DAILIES	DELIVERED AT HOME	BOUGHT MOST DAYS	BOUGHT OCCASIONALLY	SUNDAYS	DELIVERED AT HOME	BOUGHT MOST DAYS	BOUGHT OCCASIONALLY
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ind. on Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Observer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fin. Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mail on Sun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun. Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun. Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

We may occasionally send you details of offers from ourselves, or other companies, which we think would interest you. If you do not wish to receive these mailings, please tick the box ☐

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3,578.6 -14.4

FT-SE 250
3,938.2 -3.1

FT-SE 350
1,779.4 -5.9

SEAQ VOLUME
659.7m shares,

30,181 bargains

Gilts Index
92.91 -0.02

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200

210 220 230 240 250 260 270 280 290 300

310 320 330 340 350 360 370 380 390 400

410 420 430 440 450 460 470 480 490 500

510 520 530 540 550 560 570 580 590 600

610 620 630 640 650 660 670 680 690 700

710 720 730 740 750 760 770 780 790 800

810 820 830 840 850 860 870 880 890 900

910 920 930 940 950 960 970 980 990 1000

1010 1020 1030 1040 1050 1060 1070 1080 1090 1100

1110 1120 1130 1140 1150 1160 1170 1180 1190 1200

1210 1220 1230 1240 1250 1260 1270 1280 1290 1300

1310 1320 1330 1340 1350 1360 1370 1380 1390 1400

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1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000

2010 2020 2030 2040 2050 2060 2070 2080 2090 2100

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2210 2220 2230 2240 2250 2260 2270 2280 2290 2300

2310 2320 2330 2340 2350 2360 2370 2380 2390 2400

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Footsie goes into reverse as bid talk slows down

TAKING STOCK

The takeover rumour mill - which has pushed shares to new peaks - almost ground to a halt as the stock market twitched at the anniversary of the 1987 crash.

The FT-SE100 index slipped 14.4 points to 3,578.6 in largely uneventful trading with the inevitable profit taking contributing to the caution.

Much of the remaining bid speculation centred on fund manager Gartmore, 11p higher at 304p, with a strike today from BAI Industries or National Westminster Bank the popular guess. Bank of Scotland, up 5.5p to 267p, was another still in the bid frame and Vodafone, as the long anticipated US offer continued to captivate, gained 6p to 269.5p.

Insurances were also embroiled in bid talk - and some positive analysts' comments also contributed to the action. But best prices were not held with General Accident ad-

vancing 21p before ending 13p down at 675p.

But the major influence on many shares was a high-powered investment conference held by stockbroker Panmure Gordon.

More than 100 overseas fund managers who invest in London shares are attending the two day affair which started yesterday and involves presentations by about a dozen UK companies.

Pearson, the banking to media group, is due to meet the foreign investors today. With talk flowing of carve-up bids or even a shot from an overseas media group the shares gained 18p to 661p.

Henderson Crosthwaite has estimated Pearson's break up value at 900p and there were views Cazenove, the company's stockbroker, had, for internal consumption, come out with an estimate of 835p. Pearson was at pains to damp-



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

en the story and said it believed the rumour was untrue. However City cynics were not convinced that Cazenove, the most secretive of City securities houses, had not, like many other houses, produced its own estimates of Pearson's worth.

Allied Domecq, with figures due next month, was another helped along by break up talk. ABN Amro Hoare Govett has pondered the possibility of Allied selling its prized spirits division, which includes Teacher's and Ballantine's Scotch whiskeys and Beefeater gin, and concentrating on retailing. Analyst Julie Bower believes Allied could get £4.7bn for its spirits operations.

With the brewing side, which is for sale, and the remaining food and soft drink operations fetching around £500m, Ms Bower suggests Allied could swallow Burger King from Grand Met, buy back 10 per cent of its shares and end up with a 666p a share value. The price rose 6.5p to 534p.

Tarmac dipped 1p to 89p. Besides being a victim of the widespread construction gloom the shares are unsettled by the proposed sale of the housebuilding side. With at least two other significant housebuilders on the market there are stories Tarmac will be forced to reduce its cash ex-

pectations considerably. Speculators in Smith & Nephew, the healthcare group, will have to lower their sights as the shares slumped into the casualty ward. Johnson & Johnson, the US group which has for long been rumoured as a suitor has instead descended on Cordis, a medical group, with a £1.6bn offer.

Yorkshire Electric's giveaway package left its shares 15p off at 899p. Arjo Wiggins Appleton lost 6p to 231p as SBC Warburg cut its profit estimates while GEC slipped 7p to 326p on talk trading was falling below expectations. Cray Electronics firmed 1p to 44p on bid talk. Northernbell held at 195p, with investors seemingly unimpressed by talk of strong trading. Tring International, a cassette publisher, plunged 27p to 59p and Malaya, a garage chain, lost 4.75p to 9.25p on profit warnings.

Laird, the vehicle components group, reversed 15p to

419p. Analysts have visited its French operations and worries surfaced that profit downgrades will follow.

Trafalgar House duly produced a grim trading statement. But takeover hopes, the Keswick family's promised support and thoughts that the shares could be a recovery play, left the price 0.75p firmer at 21.75p. Turnover, at nearly 30 million shares, was the highest of the day.

Grosvenor Inns held at 230p. It has raised £1.4m through a share placing with institutions at 219p. Director David Bruce, who founded the Firkin pub chain, has sold 200,000 shares, also at 219p, and now has 3.8 per cent.

Bakyrchik Gold continued to slide on worries about technical problems and its need for a cash injection, falling 5p to 152p. But Williams de Broe remains keen, talking of a value up to 300p a share.

Acorn Computer surged 31p to 144p as word seeped out that investment meetings were being arranged. They are likely to concentrate on Advanced RISC Machines, the 42.8 per cent associate which has developed a new range of high-performance, low-powered computer chips and is seen as the jewel in the Acorn crown.

Best known for supplying computers to schools, Acorn lost £3.4m last year and £7.6m in the half year to July. The shares topped £10 in the early 1980s.

Stanford Rook, developing a talkerless telephone, has won a buy recommendation from Nick Woolf of Nomura, the Japanese securities house. Stanford shares have had a remarkable run. They closed at 190p, up 20p. Since arriving on AIM the price has been down to 96p.

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details or rights x Ex-dividend x Ex-all a United Securities Market suspended by Fully Paid on All Paid Shares.

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from home. Simply dial 0891 123 335, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by the one or two-digit code below.

FT-SE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rates 04 Privatisation Issues 36
UK Stock Market Report 01 Bullion Report 05 Water Shares 39
UK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40
Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41

Anyone with a time-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facilities, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline (07) 873 4575 (9.30am - 5.30pm).

Call cost 30p per minute (cheap rates), and 40p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

MARKET LEADERS: TOP 20 VOLUMES

Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000
Standard Water	10,000	Anglo Group	4,700	ASDA Group	7,200
Dorset	35,500	GRE	11,000	Royal Insurance	4,600
Traveller House	20,000	Prudential	10,000	RPI & Scotland	7,200
BT	14,000	Harman	9,000	Cable & Wire	7,200
South White Star	14,000	Wendover	8,000	Sainsbury	7,200

FT-SE 100 INDEX HOUR BY HOUR

Open 3587.7 down 5.3	11.00 3581.4 down 11.6	14.00 3579.2 down 13.8
09.00 3585.0 up 2.0	12.00 3581.1 down 11.9	15.00 3577.4 down 15.6
10.00 3580.8 down 12.2	13.00 3580.4 down 12.6	16.00 3575.7 down 12.0
		Close 3578.6 down 14.4

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

BT 14.00 3579.2 down 13.8
BT 15.00 3577.4 down 15.6
BT 16.00 3575.7 down 12.0
BT Close 3578.6 down 14.4

RETAILERS, FOOD

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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RETAILERS, GENERAL

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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TEXTILES & APPAREL

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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TOBACCO

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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TRANSPORT

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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SPIRITS, WINES & CIDERS

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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SUPPORT SERVICES

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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RIGHTS ISSUES

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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RECENT ISSUES

ASDA Group 7.20
Sainsbury 7.20
M&S 7.20
Waitrose 7.20
Morrisons 7.20
Lloyds 7.20
Heron 7.20
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sport

Red Rum still pulls the crowds at Aintree

Racing
GREG WOOD

Aintree will not stage a card until the middle of next month, but the course's doors were thrown open yesterday to allow the public to pay their respects to Red Rum, who was buried by the Grand National winning post after his death on Wednesday.

Throughout the day, a stream of Red Rum's fans, many carrying wreaths, made their way to the low, white picket fence which marks his grave, to pay their respects to the greatest horse in Grand National history. Among them was Jackie Grainger, now 76, who was the head lad at Ginger McCain's stable when the horse arrived there in 1972. "He won nine handicaps in the three and a half years I was there, including his first Grand National and the Scottish National," he said. "He was a great horse and I am a proud man to have been associated with him."

On the Aintree grandstand, the flag was flying at half-mast, while the course executive will consider a permanent tribute to

Red Rum. "There will definitely be a memorial to him here," Joe McNally, the track's marketing manager, said. "We will take our time to make sure we plan something fitting." It also seems certain that a race will be named in his honour.

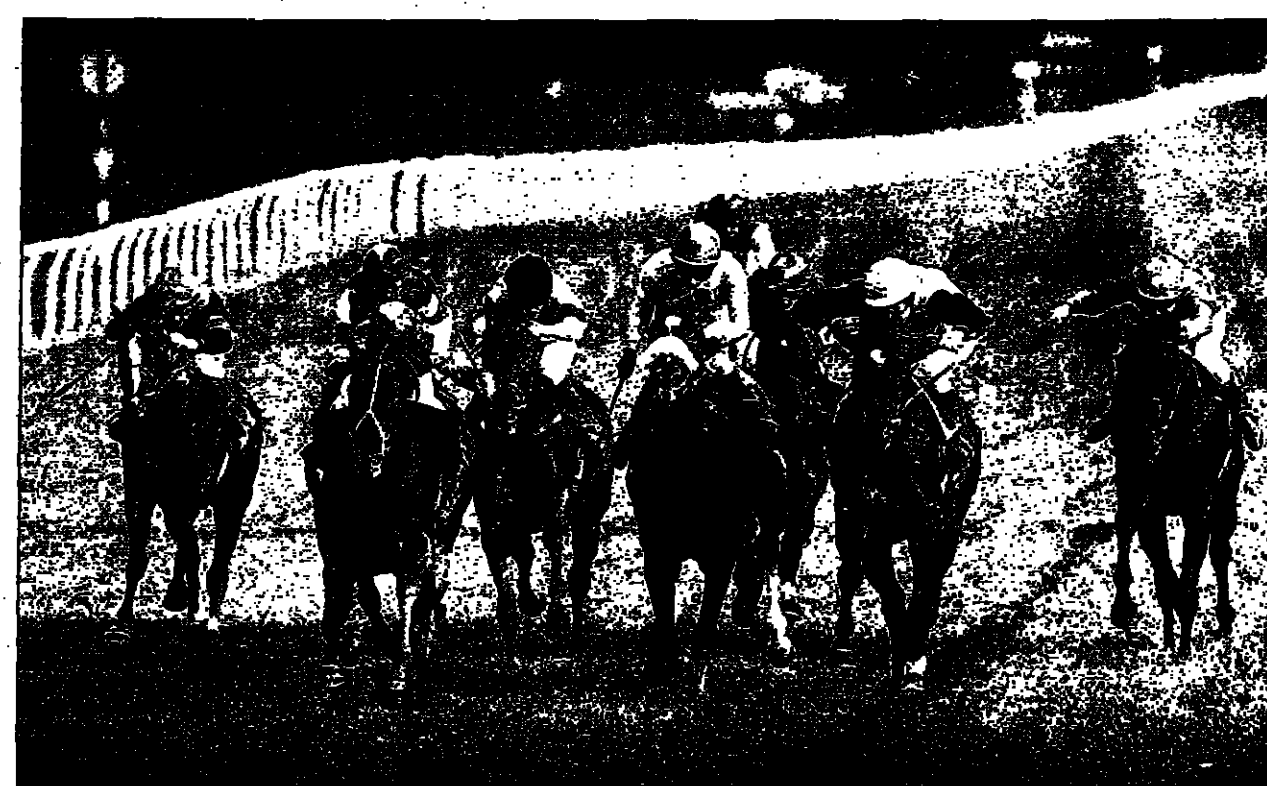
On a day when punters were prepared to visit a track which was not racing, the Horris Hill Stakes card at Newbury was all ways going to be low-key. The Group Three feature race, which features on the CVs of Kris and Trol, was won by Tumbleweed Ridge, who was beaten only narrowly by the excellent Royal Applause in the Gimcrack at York and was runner-up to Even Top in his last race at Newbury yesterday, though, only Brian Meehan, his trainer, seriously believes that the son of Indian Ridge has a chance in next year's 2,000 Guineas.

Meehan has backed his colt for the Classic at 100-1 and 66-1, but even after putting some black type against his name, the bookmakers have cut him no further than 40-1. "He'd had a hard race in the Gimcrack and

went to Newmarket a gallop short, but this is exciting," Meehan said. "Provided everything goes all right I'm sure he will be a Guineas horse next year."

The sadness and gestures of respect which followed the death of Red Rum, not to mention the thoughtful dignity with which he was interred at Liverpool, have reflected great credit on British racing. There is less for the sport to celebrate in Australia, though, where a major administrative body has been relieved of its responsibilities following allegations of corruption and race-fixing.

Richard Face, the racing minister for New South Wales, announced yesterday that a new body, the NSW Thoroughbred Racing Council, will replace the Australian Jockey Club as the state's governing body. "A report has revealed widespread corruption and fraud," he said. "The council is now over for these people." He added that his action was necessary to retain public confidence in the sport. A man in his position, however, should surely be familiar with the old saying about horses and stable doors.



Tumbleweed Ridge (second left) wins yesterday's Horris Hill Stakes at Newbury

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Atherton arrives in SA with a warning

Cricket

Mike Atherton marked England's arrival in Johannesburg yesterday by warning that his team would "fight fire with fire" against South Africa's Test pace bowlers.

The South African pace attack would be an important factor, Atherton said when the England team arrived on the first official tour for 30 years.

"Pace is obviously their strong suit, but we have a very settled top five and our batsmen are not shy as they've proved in the past," he said. "We have also got some pace of our own and if used we can fight fire with fire."

The England manager, Ray Illingworth, predicted a very close series and hoped England could repeat their form of the drawn six-Test summer series against the West Indies. England play five Tests and seven one-day internationals on the 14-week tour.

"The spectators would have their money's worth if the series finished 3-2 and obviously I hope that we will be on the right side of that equation," Illingworth said. "We realise it's an important tour and that we have responsibilities aside from the cricket."

Illingworth said that England would be happy to be involved in South Africa's cricketing development programme "but at the end of the day we are here to play good cricket and to win". This is England's first tour since M J K Smith's team won a three-Test series 1-0 in 1964/65.

The only player to be asked for his autograph was predictably enough, the South African-born batsman Robin Smith. It was a very different scene when Mike Gatting led a rebel England team to Johannesburg. On that occasion, the players were not welcomed by most people in a country still ruled by apartheid. In 1990, Gatting and his team were surrounded by "miners".

Heavy rain may scupper the squad's chances of training outdoors at the Wanderers ground in Johannesburg today. Indoor nets at Rand Afrikaans University will be used if the weather does not improve.

The tour begins with a friendly one-day match against Niall O'Connell's XI at Halfway House next Tuesday. The new £2.4m Indoor School at Lord's was officially opened yesterday. Bigger than the original Indoor School, which was built in 1977 and demolished to make way for the new one, the latest edifice - designed by architect David Morley - gives MCC and English cricket in general a much-needed modern and up-to-date facility. The new school, funded by the MCC, the Lord's Taverners and a £700,000 grant from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, can be used for six or eight-a-side cricket as well as being divided into eight rooms. There is a video coaching room, a spectator gallery and bar, and extensive changing rooms.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

7.45 unless stated
HAWKESBURG NATIONALS WORLD CUP GROUP A
Cook Islands v Scotland
(at Whithorn Road, Coatbridge)
Russia v United States
(at Walsworth, Warrington)

Rugby League

7.30 unless stated
HALFAN EMBERRING NATIONS WORLD CUP GROUP A
Croatia v Scotland
(at Whithorn Road, Coatbridge)
Russia v United States
(at Walsworth, Warrington)

Rugby Union

CLUB MATCH: Pontypool v Aberystwyth (7.0)

Speedway

17.45 unless stated
Preston v Wigan
(at Wigan, Wigan)

Other sports

BASKETBALL: McDonald's Championship semi-finals (London Arena)
GOLF: Alfred Dunhill Cup (St Andrews)
TENNIS: International women's tournament (Gillingham)

THE INDEPENDENT

Horse Racing

Results 0839-111 171
Commentary 0331-111 175

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NEWBURY 102 202 302
P'KENHAM 103 203 303

NEWBURY

2.05 Jathin (nb)
2.40 Executive Design
3.10 SOUTHOUL (nap)
3.40 Clifton Beat

GOING: Hurdles - Good; Chases - Good to Firm.

Left-hand course.
Course is 52 of town near A24. Station (service from London, Paddington) adjoins course. ADMISSION: Members £18; Thatchers £8; Silver Ring £8 (OAPs half price). CARE FARE: Free; Phone area £3 per call plus 53p per person.

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although Ajax have proved that total domestic dominance need not hinder success in the wider arena, the Dutch game is more compatible with European football as a whole than the Scottish. To pick just one aspect, the tackling allowed in Scotland bears no resemblance to that permitted in Europe – as Alex Cleland found.

[illegible]

to their ban – but when the required number of officials did not attend two meetings called by the league to discuss the problem, the Cambridgeshire club were suspended by the league's management committee.

Both sides were due to attend another meeting at Diss last night, so if Wisbech have promised to cater by the rules in future, their suspension may be lifted today. It has been, as their joint-manager, Ian Jones, admitted, an "embarrassing" episode for the club, who finished runners-up in the Jowson League last season.

[illegible][illegible]

The number of days that William Ayache was in charge of Cannes, who are bottom of the French Second Division. He was sacked after asking for a contract to run until the end of next season should the football club avoid relegation.

SPORT

'Ray Harford also demonstrated a depressing lack of feeling for a competition whose allure is second only to the World Cup. It was as if the lessons absorbed and applied by previous champions had been erased'

Phil Shaw on Blackburn's European failings, page 31

Video evidence condemns Dicks

Football

LIZ SEARL AND CLIVE WHITE

Julian Dicks, the West Ham full-back, was yesterday suspended for three matches after being found guilty of "violent conduct" by the Football Association amid claims that, despite hard evidence, it had settled for a trial by video.

The charge arose from an incident which left Chelsea's John Spencer needing eight stitches in a head wound.

After three hours of deliberation in a London hotel, an

FA commission discounted expert advice and a submission by the full-back's victim.

Dicks was accused of stamping on Spencer's head out of the referee's view. The incident was captured on Sky Television, and the FA decided to act, despite protestations from Spencer that he believed the injury was not deliberate.

Spencer submitted a written statement for the hearing, which explained his view. The Chelsea manager, Glenn Hoddie, did not allow him to attend the hearing.

But after viewing video

recordings "from two angles on very many occasions", the commission decided to follow the lead of the match referee, Robbie Hart. He was asked to view the incident and then said that he had seen the stamping on the field. Dicks would definitely have been sent off.

Controversially, the commission did not accept advice offered by Peter Harrison, the general secretary of the Physical Education Association, who told the commission that the collision was inevitable and an "unfortunate accident".

Harrison had been called to

the hearing by West Ham, who had been confident before the hearing that Dicks' action would be vindicated, despite his poor discipline record. Dicks has been booked 54 times and sent off nine times during his career. After the verdict, the club's managing director, Peter Storr, said it would consider launching an appeal over the next two weeks.

"We are obviously all very disappointed," he said. "The short sentence imposed of three games shows that there was an element of doubt in the proceedings. It seems to me that it

is the way the game is going. Trial by video is part of the business now and we have to accept that it works both ways."

Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, would not say whether he thought Dicks' "hard man" image had prompted the FA's decision to penalise the player, but he was shocked at the result. "I am convinced that he was innocent," he said, although he refused to blame the absence of Spencer for the guilty verdict. He was adamant that Dicks was not guilty in the eyes of the club, and announced that he would not be fined by

them. The player will also retain his first team place.

Premiership clubs next season will be able to name five substitutes but will still only be allowed to send on three, the Premier League has decided. The decision should improve clubs' tactical options.

Hull City have placed their entire playing staff on the transfer list after being served with a winding-up order by the Inland Revenue.

The musician Rick Wakeman has dismissed reports that he is part of a consortium offering to inject £10m into struggling

Manchester City. Speculation that Wakeman was involved followed a remark by Michael Peck, a Manchester-based businessman, that his consortium was supported by a rock star. Wakeman is a big City fan.

Birmingham City are being investigated by the Football League after their First Division rivals Stoke City accused them of making an illegal approach to re-sign striker Paul Peschiglido, who is married to the Birmingham managing director, Karen Brady.

Fifa ponders video replays, page 31



Candid camera: Julian Dicks is caught on video stamping on Chelsea's John Spencer

Everton draw little consolation

GUY HODGSON

Everton
Feyenoord

Larsson, were the sum total of the Dutch efforts before the interval.

Everton, meanwhile, had three clear efforts, the best of which was a shot by Paul Rideout that tested the agility of Ed De Goey after seven minutes.

There was also a header from Graham Stuart that flew over and a shot from Samways that was not hit hard enough to profit fully from Stuart's intelligent pass.

The moment that had Goodison buzzing with frustration, however, came when Jackson burst past a defender on the right and then was bowled over by Blinker in the area. It looked obstruction at the very least, but the referee waved play on.

Like the first half, Feyenoord began the second on the attack and an intelligent pass to the left of the area by Blinkers allowed Giovanni van Bronckhorst a sight of goal. His shot from a narrow angle was saved by Southall, but only by his legs.

Everton's response was immediate. Samways only just failing to reach Anders Limpar's cross from the left after 47 minutes. Six minutes later, Stuart was denied contact with the ball as he dived in by a late touch from a defender.

There was alarm in the Dutch area, too, when De Goey slipped as he punched clear and was saved only by Ronald Koeman's quick thinking. The home frustration was growing, however, with every failed attack.

A warning for the home side came after three minutes when Neville Southall had to fling himself to his left to block Regi Blinker's shot. This, and a high, wide effort by Henrik

Everton (3-5-2): Southall; Barker, Short, Abbott; Jackson (Holmes, 81), Home, Samways, Unsworth, Limpar (Bosch, 81), Stuart, Redout.

Feyenoord (4-1-3-2): De Goey; Zwanenberg (Huis, 80), van Gassel, Koeman, Bonting; Mias, Larsson (Ivan, 81), Witschey, Bronckhorst; Olsou, Bakker (Truist, 80).

Referee: H Weber (Germany).

Donato strikes for Deportivo in Turkey

ROUND-UP

A second-half goal from Donato gave the Spanish side, Deportivo La Coruña, a 1-0 victory over Turkey's Trabzonspor yesterday in a second round, first-leg match of the Cup Winners Cup.

The Brazilian-born Spaniard Donato headed the Spanish cup holders into a 1-0 lead from a corner in the 60th minute to give his team an important away goal going into the second leg in Spain.

Trabzonspor did most of the attacking in the first half and had their best chance in the 33rd minute when the ball nearly went in after a goalmouth scramble.

After going a goal down, Trabzonspor put Deportivo's goal under severe pressure, but were unable to take advantage of several more goal scoring opportunities.

Trabzonspor's two central defenders, Osman Ozkoylu and Oguz Temizkanoglu, will both miss the crucial second-leg match after receiving yellow cards.

Some 27,500 fans watched the game at the Avni Aker stadium in this fishing city on Turkey's northern coast.

In another second round, first leg tie in Russia, Dynamo Moscow gained a slender advantage when they beat Hradec Kralove, of the Czech Republic, 1-0 thanks to a 59th-minute goal by Yuri Kuznetsov.

FOOTBALL RESULTS

European Cup-Winners' Cup
Second round first leg

Deportivo 1-0 Trabzonspor

Trabzonspor 0-1 Deportivo

Other ties: Dynamo Moscow 1-0 Hradec Kralove (2-2 Replay); Trabzonspor 0-1 Deportivo La Coruña (1-1 Draw); Hradec Kralove 1-0 Dynamo.

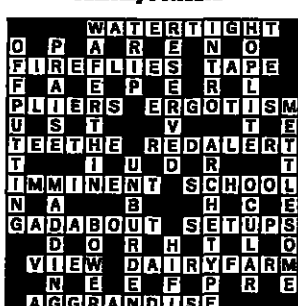
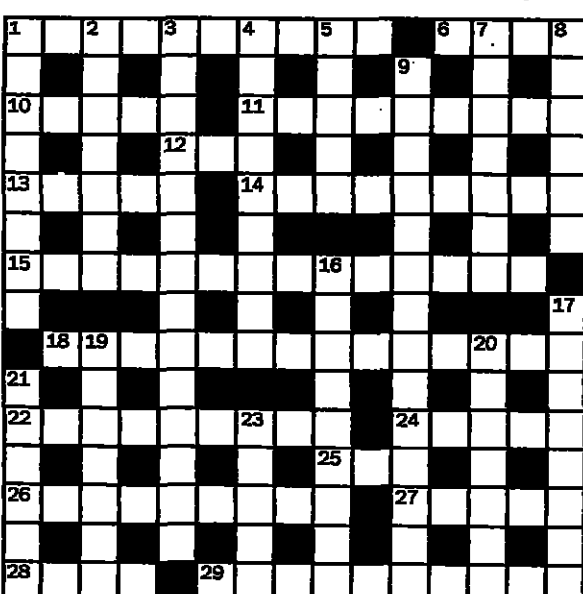
PONTIS LEAGUE First Division: Liverpool 0 Oldham Athletic 1.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2810, Friday 20 October

By Mass

Thursday's solution



ACROSS

- 1 Party discipline, in a moral sense (10)
- 6 Seeks jobs with time off (4)
- 10 Yellow, the French Benedictine? Mostly (5)
- 11 It gets one down, cultivating a patch with rue (9)
- 12 Deity — one without end (3)
- 13 Figure on swinging a nine-piece number? (5)
- 14 Valued property I'm inhabiting, on Dee (9)
- 15 Being too nice as a critic? (9,5)
- 18 Londoner, say, built up the store near us (5-9)
- 22 They are found before many a grind (9)

DOWN

- 24 Scored work's recorded (5)
- 25 Fish right out in the drink (3)
- 26 Country's joint leader getting CIA involved (5,4)
- 27 Check, including last of gingivitis in gum (5)
- 28 Consider letter Mass appended? (4)
- 29 Like country relations, perhaps (10)
- 1 Mark is sitting on Eastern settle (8)
- 2 Minor (so-called) (7)
- 3 It's inherent in an exercise (14)
- 4 Gap-filler? One might swear by it (9)

CONVEYANCE

- 5 Conveyance loaded with a weight (5)
- 7 Second trading ship's run (7)
- 8 Constant support (6)
- 9 One of Tommy's mates? (1,7-2,4)
- 16 Yawn (carrying unwieldy cases) shows loss of energy (3,6)
- 17 Care to make money, pocketing rough cut? (8)
- 19 Show who's boss! (7)
- 20 Girl who finds some sonatas Handelian (7)
- 21 First of soldiers marched in ranks (6)
- 23 Incompatible article about fiction (5)

Andrew calls a halt to his international career

Rugby Union
STEVE BALE

Waspes Rugby Club last night did the nearest thing to throwing out two of their most distinguished players when they told Rob Andrew and Dean Ryan, their defectors to Newcastle, that they would no longer be considered for selection.

Whereupon Andrew, having said all season that he wished to carry on his England career, announced his retirement from international rugby at the age of 32 with 70 caps and a record 373 points. Lawrence Dallaglio replaces Ryan as captain.

The London club's trauma had been exacerbated earlier yesterday when Nick Popplewell, their Irish prop, confessed that he too would be joining Andrew, Newcastle's development director, and Ryan, Andrew's new assistant, in the North-east. This latest body-blow served to reinforce the feeling among the selectors at Sudbury that enough was enough.

Considering the service they

have given Waspes, it is a sour ending for Andrew and Ryan. Jack Rowell, the England manager, will not be too distraught at having to decide on a new outside-half — Mike Catt or David Pears — for the South Africa match at Twickenham on 18 November.

Ryan had this week become Andrew's first major recruit for Newcastle — a turn of events that forcibly changed Waspes' mind about choosing Andrew for as long as the Rugby Football Union's 120-day qualification period remained in force.

In the end, the position of both Andrew and the club became untenable when Andrew was seen to be undermining Waspes from the inside by trying to pick off their best players, using the substantial carrot of salaries rock-

oned in Ryan's case to be worth as much as £50,000 a year.

However, Andrew's parting shot was typically gracious. "It is with great regret that I have decided to retire from international rugby," he said. "Following Waspes' decision to exclude Dean Ryan and myself from the team, I have decided that I must re-

move myself from any further speculation as to my possible inclusion in the England team.

"I have greatly enjoyed playing for both England and Waspes over the past 10 years and I would not want my recent appointment with Newcastle to cause any unnecessary damage to England's prospects on or off the field. As the South Africa game draws near, the squad needs stability and I, along with all the rugby fraternity, look forward to a new, fresh and successful England team developing over the next few years, culminating with England being crowned world champions in 1999."

Sir Pat Lowry, chairman of the Waspes executive, said: "In taking this decision, the executive have the following points in mind: One, the overriding priority for Waspes to retain their place as one of England's premier clubs; two, the need, each week, to select players who are totally motivated towards the success of the club and not distracted by commitments and responsibilities undertaken elsewhere; three, the need to build for the future."

Cardiff's 'derisory' offer for Davies

Cardiff's first offer to take Jonathan Davies back to rugby union amounted to a "derisory" £30,000, Warrington said yesterday, insisting that they will not release Davies without compensation of at least £200,000.

Graham Armstrong, the Warrington chief executive, said that Cardiff offered £30,000 for the

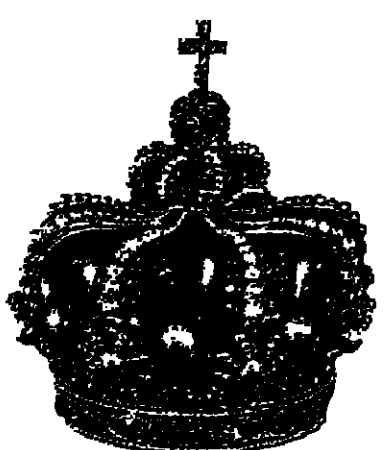
goal-kicking utility back when they began talks a fortnight ago. "Jonathan is under contract until June 1997 and we are adamant we don't want him to go," Armstrong said. "If he signs for Cardiff without our approval, we will sue him for breach of contract."

"We understand two other Welsh clubs and a London side

want Jonathan, but they will have to wait until they come up with £200,000 or more.

"They offered a derisory £30,000 for Jonathan's immediate release and insisted there was no more money available. Now we have had a fax from Cardiff's lawyers, and it's clear they want Jonathan straight away."

A HAT



The MALT



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